Journal

of

Urban

Culture

Research

Chulalongkorn
University

Osaka
Metropolitan
University

Journal of Urban Culture Research

Volume 30 Jan - Jun 2025

Journal of Urban Culture Research

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Editorial
Generative AI and Generative Urban Culture:
Reimagining Cities from Code to Community

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In the 21st century, cities are not only built – they are generated. The convergence of Generative AI and Generative Urban Culture signals a new chapter in urban evolution, one shaped not just by planners or policymakers, but by algorithms, prompts, and participatory creativity. As artificial intelligence advances from tool to co-creator, the cultural DNA of cities is being reprogrammed – from how communities express identity, to how space, memory, and participation are digitally mapped and culturally shaped.

Generative AI, which refers to machine learning models capable of producing new content – texts, images, soundscapes, even architectural forms – has rapidly permeated everyday life. Tools like ChatGPT, Midjourney, and DALL·E are enabling artists, designers, urbanists, and citizens to visualize new possibilities for public life. In parallel, we are witnessing the rise of Generative Urban Culture, where urban dwellers generate not only aesthetic content, but participatory meaning. Cities today are "written" collaboratively through hashtags, street art, digital media, memes, TikToks, augmented reality (AR), and open-source design—a process intensified and expanded by AI.

This cultural shift is not just cosmetic– it is structural. The logic of planning is being reshaped by the logic of prompts. In traditional planning paradigms, spatial design was fixed by blueprints and policy. Now, city-making becomes iterative and conversational, with AI

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enabling a feedback loop between the material and the imaginative. Prompts – linguistic or visual cues used to guide AI outputs – become new cultural tools for designing experiences, proposing alternatives, and visualizing inclusivity. Rather than producing static master-plans, generative processes support a fluid, culturally responsive urbanism.

Take, for example, the AI-assisted community mapping projects in Amsterdam and Tokyo, where local histories and cultural narratives are being synthesized into visual and spatial representations of neighborhoods. These "living maps" are generated not solely from GIS data, but from stories, social media, and AI-trained cultural cues (Batty 2023). Similarly, in Bangkok and Mexico City, youth-led design interventions now involve generative image tools to brainstorm murals and public spaces rooted in community identity and environmental activism (UN-Habitat 2023).

Crucially, this shift invites a reevaluation of authorship, ownership, and representation. Who gets to define the city? Generative AI complicates traditional binaries between expert and citizen, planner and participant, artist and algorithm. This editorial argues that Generative Urban Culture emerges precisely from this ambiguity – a hybrid cultural terrain in which meaning, memory, and power are co-authored. The city becomes a canvas, not only for artists or architects, but for anyone who can prompt, remix, or imagine.

Yet we must not romanticize the algorithm. The risks of cultural homogenization, data bias, and surveillance creep in unnoticed. When generative tools are trained on historically biased datasets, they risk reproducing colonial aesthetics or erasing local nuance (Crawford 2021). Equally urgent is the need to avoid prompts that reflect only shallow cultural symbols, which can deviate from genuine urban realities and distort public understanding of place, identity, and heritage. The promise of participatory creativity must be matched with critical literacy and urban ethics. To ensure that generative cities are also just cities, cultural policy must foreground equity, inclusion, and the right to urban imagination.

This is not simply a tech trend; it is a cultural turn. Generative Urban Culture reflects a broader longing for agency, co-creation, and expressive public life. In an age of climate anxiety, social fragmentation, and post-pandemic recovery, AI offers not escape, but expansion—a way to reimagine urban futures through collective imagination. The challenge is not whether we will use generative tools, but how we will embed them in our civic and cultural fabric.

As urban scholars and cultural researchers, we are called to engage critically and creatively. This journal invites submissions that explore how AI, art, and agency intersect in today's cities. We believe that in reimagining cities from code to community, we do not just plan better spaces—we cultivate more humane, inclusive, and vibrant urban cultures.

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Special Feature
Wounded But Not Broken:
Terror, Grief, Healing and Music[1]

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Abstract

On December 21, 2023, a student of Charles University in Prague, one of the safest places in the world, shot dead 14 academics and students. Amidst omnipresent grief and mourning, the process of coping and "healing" started immediately, manifested in particular through a series of events called the "Month for the Faculty." This text is based on participation in and research of these activities. The theoretical part uses the Durkheim's concept of *piacular rites,* the aim of which is to "reconfirm [a] community's solidarity." Following the recommendations of Bin Xu (2016), we investigated who the main agents were in the decision-making regarding shapes of events, as well as tensions in its negotiations. Performed music of various genres is viewed through the perspective of *affect*. The following section present the process of renewal at the level of the university and its close neighborhood: events connected with the creation of commemorative sites, which became temporary *"lieux de mémoire"* (Nora 1989), etc. The third part is focused on two face-to-face communities where music played a crucial role. We look at the negotiations behind the organization of these (musical) events as well as their execution and what was expected from them. In the conclusion, function of music is discussed. It corresponds with what Frith (1996) calls "coming together through music as a performative social and emotional project" which is in agreement with functions of *piacular rites*.

Keywords: *Music, Terror, Disaster, Healing*

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Introduction

Friday, December 21, 2023, shortly before 4 o'clock. Like several other colleagues, I am in a hurry to attend the Christmas party of our school - the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University. Surprisingly, they won't let us into the building, even though there are obviously people inside. Within a few minutes, the dean (surrounded by police officers) tells us that due to the shooting in the building of the Faculty of Arts of the same university, all events are cancelled. It sounds quite surreal to us: a shooting at the Faculty of Arts? The first information begins to appear on the Internet: in a frenzy of gunfire, someone (we later learn that a 5th year history student at the Faculty) shot 14 people (the number of victims is initially unknown, but gradually increasing) and then committed suicide. A bit like in a ghostly dream, I take tram number 17, which coincidentally connects both buildings - ours in Troja with the main building of the Faculty of Arts in the very centre of the city, about 5 km away.

Figure 1. Faculty of Arts in the middle, Rudolfinum on the left, UMPRUM on the right. Photo Z.J.).

At the bus stop I meet my student Zuzka. The tram doesn't run for a long time; only after about half an hour we realise that it is because of the disaster at the Faculty of Arts: the city centre is paralysed. Still at the tram stop, I start getting questions on WhatsApp. First from my friend Kay Kaufman Shelemay in Boston: "Zuzana, I'm reading about the shooting at Charles University. Are you okay? Confirm immediately!" Over the next 48 hours, I get many similar inquiries: colleagues from Oregon to Turkey to Israel express concern and participation.

Since that evening, December 21, 2023, the event - completely unprecedented not only in Prague but in the Czech Republic (Prague was, and still is, one of the safest places in the world) - filled the main TV and radio news, the front pages of newspapers and other media for many days…[3] The intervention of the police, who were on the scene within four minutes of the first emergency call, was discussed again and again; despite various comments, it is considered exemplary. Over and over again we watched videos of the intervention, and students crouching on the outside ledge on the 4th floor, trying to escape the room where the most massive shooting occurred.

A week later, I was the recipient of a mass email from a teacher in the Department of Religious Studies to the university's anthropologists:[4] The rector's board is planning a series of events, called Month for the Faculty, and is asking academics and anthropology students to document them so that it can later evaluate what worked and what didn't. A hectic email

discussion ensues, during which some express concerns about re-traumatization (especially of students). One anthropologist, however, points to the importance of rituals as ways of closing the event and establishing order.[5] Subsequently, a team of six teachers and 15-20 students was formed;[6] our five-member ethnomusicology group agreed both to participate in the documentation and to try to understand the place of music in this extraordinary situation - especially since one of the first known victims was the head of the musicology department, Lenka Hlávková.

On the second of January, the first team meeting took place (a WhatsApp group was set up to share information), and on the fourth of January, the first big, extremely emotional event, called the Embrace of the Faculty, took place with 4 - 5 thousand participants. Already in the "Hug" some features manifested themselves, which we then witnessed repeatedly in the "Month for the Faculty ." Three of these were particularly striking. The first, surfacing in every conversation, and observable in every event, was community solidarity, whereas communities could be understood at different levels, from the most intimate - face-to-face groups (students of the same major), to the global e.g. state communities, as evidenced by the numerous questions from my fellow ethnomusicologists. The second striking feature was the ubiquitous presence of two women at the head of the institutions in question: the dean of the Faculty of Arts, Eva Lehecková, and the rector of Charles University, Milena Králíčková

Figure 2. The Dean Lehecková, second from the left, and the Rector Králíčková, next to her, at the Embrace of the Faculty. Photo Z.J.

Photo from the culmination of the Faculty Embrace (By the way, for the first time in the nearly seven hundred years of history of the university, both positions are held by women). Both of them seemed very empathetic and authentic in the sense that they were experiencing real grief. At the same time, in short, with new speeches each time, they shaped a narrative that contained both effective compassion and support,[7] and an increasingly hopeful outlook for the future; the main emphasis in these speeches was on the cohesiveness of the community. A third striking feature of the "Embrace of the Faculty," a feature later hidden in many other events, was the involvement of top professionals: those involved in the organisation of large "events" such as the parade through the centre of Prague and the later placement of modular houses on the square in front of the Faculty, which will be discussed later (the building of the Faculty of Arts was closed until 19 February), psychologists, security forces, and also the management of neighbouring institutions – UMPRUM (Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design), the National Theatre and the Czech Philharmonic. For a whole month, a "memorial fire" was also burning in the square, which

was tended by students in addition to security guards most of the time. Some students testified to the importance of their representatives' constant vigil, but on the other hand, it was not possible to provide student guards for all two-hour slots.

Figure 3. Modular houses in front of the Faculty. Photo O.P.

Over the next six weeks or so, several dozen events took place both in the modular houses and elsewhere, only some of which were formally framed by the university initiative; these are discussed in the following sections of this text. In addition to the musical events on which we focus here, there were, for example, the "Readings for the Faculty," initiated by the faculty linguists, since one of the victims was a Scandinavian language teacher, or a workshop organized by the neighboring UMPRUM in which a commemorative object was made from the remains of candles lit in the first days after the shooting (photo). At the end of January, the Month was formally closed with a concert by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra with Mahler's Symphony No. 3; the auditorium of Prague's main concert hall, the Rudolfinum, was reserved for those who had participated in the restoration at Charles University. By way of explanation, the Czech Philharmonic building is adjacent to the Faculty of Arts and after the December shooting became a backroom for terrified students and academics. By offering a special concert for the Faculty of Arts, the Philharmonic now affirmed a kind of local solidarity, which was also demonstrated by the UMPRUM, located on the other side of the square, by organizing a workshop.

Another milestone was the reopening of the Faculty of Arts building on February 19th with the singing of the university choir, thus starting the new semester.[8] In May, the so-called "Quiet Place" was opened on the 4th floor, where the most massive shooting took place. And then on June 21, 2024, half a year after the event, a memorial was unveiled in front of the faculty building, which will be discussed later. We see its installation as the beginning of a new chapter - a chapter of remembrance. So what was it all about before?

Search for Interpretation
Over the last few years I have been working on a book on musical recollection,[9] and so it is perhaps not too surprising that I expected an explanatory framework in *memory studies*; indeed, other colleagues have thought so too. But we didn't witness anything of the sort at

the Month for the Faculty events, and the recommended readings[10] didn't correspond with the events either. Two facts seemed obvious: first, that everything that was happening was aimed at healing the wound in the community, at whatever level we see the community; and second, that the relatively frequent music of very different genres played during Faculty Month corresponded with this "community-healing" function.

In the first case – alongside with the symbolic-anthropological conception of ritual as an event creating new relationships - the classical sociologist Emil Durkheim and his concept of *piacular rites* were explicitly offered... These represent a communal response to tragedy. They usually include mourning, prayers, or various unusual symbolic practices. All of these, according to Durkheim, are not expressions of individual emotions, but a kind of moral obligation that society imposes on its members in moments of loss. Thus, while tragedy causes devastation and death, the subsequent reactions bring community members together and reaffirm their solidarity.

When society is going through events that sadden, distress, or anger it, it pushes its members to give witness to their sadness, distress, or anger through expressive actions... It does so because those collective demonstrations, as well as the moral communion they simultaneously bear witness to and reinforce, restore to the group the energy that the events threaten to take away, and thus enables it to recover its equilibrium. (ED (orig. 1912) 1995: 415-16).

As anthropologists, we rejoiced at how reality corresponded with classical theory. At the same time, however, we knew that the interesting things emerge where tensions, or at least negotiations, are revealed. And indeed: while the visible reality seemed (as much as possible in this situation) coherent, the interviews with the actors showed a much more plastic backstage.

What About the Music?

As mentioned earlier, music, which was part of most of the activities, can be seen as a medium that performs the function of bringing together and healing the community, in Hagen's words "coming together through music as performative social and emotional project" (Hagen 2019: 16). The ways in which this was done deserve future, more thorough analysis; here we mention just two possible analytical perspectives.[11] The first is well applicable where the performance of music resembled a concert, i.e. what Turino (2008) refers to as the presentational modus of performance. In these, the compositions that were performed echoed a kind of common cultural ground of the community formed at that moment: Hospodine pomiluj ny *[Lord have mercy on us],* one of the oldest Czech songs,[12] referring to the millennia-old Czech cultural tradition, of which Charles University has been a large part, at the Embrace of the Faculty, Czech folk songs at the opening of the Faculty of Arts building, or the concert of classical, mostly medieval and Renaissance music at the Rudolfinum, organised by colleagues of the slain head of the Institute of Musicology Lenka Hlávková as a reminder of the joint - and as deliberately emphasised, uninterrupted - research in this field.

The second group is represented by active, in Turino's words, "participatory performances," most notably "Guitar Play" in modular houses and ecumenical prayer in song. Affect theory, as presented in conjunction with music by, for example, Thomson and Biddle (2013), offers itself as explanatory: affect here is something 'in between' and sound creates a specific atmosphere that allows for the modulation and circulation of moods and feelings 'that are felt but at the same time belong to no one in particular' (p. 5). This corresponds well,

moreover, with Asad's (2003) conception of pain and suffering, which he understands as largely intersubjective, localized in the social space inhabited by the individual (p. 69). That is: if the grief and pain of loss primarily resides in social space, then music, by stirring up the communal performance of music (without strictly depending on what kind),[13] the experience (affect) of togetherness, is the ideal medium for fulfilling the goals Durkheim speaks of.

Behind the Curtain

As mentioned earlier, we were engaged by the Rector's board of Charles University to document, that is, observe and describe the events. However, our ethnomusicology group conducted semi-structured interviews with the main actors at distinctly musical events; we were convinced that their answers would change later. In late March, I arranged an interview with one of the essential actors in the aftermath of the December shooting, a member of the Rector's board, R. The interview revealed the complexity of negotiating the final shape of events primarily between the Rector's board and the student community, and the strength or weakness of individual actors. R. mentioned the offer of help from abroad (for example, Norway, which has already handled the series of terrorist attacks by Anders Breivik in 2012), and the involvement of top professionals in the field of organizing mass events that we observed. He mentioned negotiating with the media, whose representatives indeed behaved much more aggressively during the first events than later, and with politicians, some of whom tended to influence the shape of the events of the Month for the Faculty. But this was hampered by the university's efforts to maintain their somewhat communal character.

The consistency of real events with the anthropological understanding of rituals, including Durkheim's concept of *piacoular rites*, also seemed clearer after the interview. Not only that, our anthropologist colleague's text on the importance of rituals for society may well have reached the Rector's board. Moreover, I learn that one of R.'s specialties is contemporary rituals. Our belief that events spontaneously testify to the validity of Durkheim's concept thus turned out to be partly naive: R. had so internalized this model that the steps he proposed to the Rector's board were, among other things, an updated realization of it. At the same time, however, it must be admitted that the concept of "healing rituals" also corresponded to events over which R and the Rector's board had no influence, such as the aforementioned concert at the Rudolfinum in memory of the musicologist Lenka Hlávková. Even during such events, however, there were various negotiations. In the following parts of the text we present relevant events and in the end we return to the stone monument in front of the Faculty of Arts, whose unveiling marks a new chapter for us.

Spontaneous Solidarity

We join the silent crowd of thousands mourning at the Faculty of Arts. An elderly woman asks me about the surrounding buildings on Jan Palach Square. At first, I'm surprised that someone would ask for tourist information in these commemorative circumstances, but I politely reply, "This is the UM-PRUM, this is the Rudolfinum, the home of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, and this is the Faculty of Arts." She thanks me and explains that she has come from Pardubice,[14] solely for this occasion, to honor the memory of the shot students. I ask her how she feels about the procession - she says she has goosebumps and that she brought candles in memory of the victims. We part quietly.

The meeting with the unknown woman from Pardubice, who had traveled a hundred kilometers to share her grief and shock with people she had probably never met during the Embrace of the Faculty, illustrates well the wave of solidarity that spread across the coun-

try in the wake of the tragedy. Many Czech towns cancelled or changed the programme of Advent events; television stations adjusted their broadcasting schedules; a memorial site was set up in front of Karolinum, the seat of the Rector's Office, the day after the shooting, where not only academics and the Rector commemorated the victims, but crowds of people came with candles, flowers, even just to stand and many more brought candles to the main building of the Faculty of Arts. Saturday, 23 December, was declared a day of national mourning and services for the victims of the tragedy were held in most churches in the country. The most important of these took place in St. Vitus Cathedral at Prague Castle, attended by the President of the Czech Republic, the Prime Minister and other political leaders as well as university representatives. The Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, the country's most important symphony orchestra, changed the programme of its New Year's concert - instead of the originally planned march "Toward a New Life" by Josef Suk, it performed Dvořák's "Nocturne in B major."

Figure 4. Candles in front of the Faculty of Arts (Photo O.P.)

Events Co-organized "From Above"

As mentioned before, following the tragic shooting and during Month for the Faculty, there were a number of commemorative events organized to reunite and heal the academic community. Some of these activities were initiated by the university's Crisis Staff, while other suggestions came directly from students and student organizations. For many of these activities, the Crisis Staff provided the organizational framework in terms of coordinating the public space, dealing with Prague's city authorities, police and other entities. External experts were co-opted into the crisis staff for this purpose, for example Michal Bek, a well-known producer of large music festivals. The University has set up a round-the-clock office for this group in a building near the Rector's Office in Celetná street,[15] which has enabled the Rector's board and the crisis task force to communicate effectively and solve problems promptly. This task was by no means trivial given the considerable heterogeneity of the university of approximately 40 000 students.

Rector's board member R. articulated the objective as follows, "The challenge was to create a framework that can be participatory enough to give back *agency* to the different groups that are going to want it, because what happened was that the attack took that *agency* at different levels. That is, the primary task was to give back *agency*, to allow things to be completed that could not be completed, and to do it in very improvised terms..."[16]

"Embracing of the Faculty" - The First Attempt at Community Healing

January 4, 2024, 1:30 in the afternoon. Two weeks after the tragedy. I have been standing for several dozen minutes in the Fruit Market,[17] a few steps away from hundreds of burning candles next to the entrance to the Karolinum, the seat of the Charles University rectorate. More and more people keep coming from all directions. It's not only students, but I recognize a few professors, and there are certainly a significant number who have come just to show their support. Although everything was undoubtedly organised at the last minute and a substantial part of the organising team is student volunteers, the whole event runs smoothly. A little before two o'clock, the rector of the University begins to speak from the window of the Estates Theatre, whose building frames one side of the square; her voice carries over the silent crowd despite the small sound system. Volunteers in reflective vests hand out leaflets with the programme of the event and the lyrics of the songs "V temnotách našich dnu" [In the Darkness of Our Days]" and "Hospodine, pomiluj ny" [Lord have mercy on us], which will later be sung in Palach Square at the lighting of the memorial fire. Then the whole procession gets underway in complete silence, which is in stark contrast to the normally very busy Celetná Street, through which thousands of tourists pass every day. The crowds of visitors to Prague have now been replaced by a procession of mourners heading in silence towards the site of the tragedy. The university Rector and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts are leading the way, both carrying lanterns with burning fire, which they will then use to light the memorial flame on Jan Palach Square. When the procession reaches the building of the Faculty of Arts in silence, it splits and forms a human chain around it, symbolically embracing it.

Most of the initiatives and proposals for commemorative events came from students, and the university administration provided the necessary support. One of the first events, and an attempt to "heal" the academic community, was an event called "To Us, To All: A Commemorative Procession and Embrace of the Faculty,"[18] which took place on January 4th 2024.

The Rector's board provided the technical and organizational background for the implementation of this primarily student initiative. The University communicated with the police, the city council and coordinated student volunteers. The undeniable and much-testified emotionality of the event was also evident in the high organizational quality: the exclusion of traffic in the very centre of the city for the duration of the procession, the number of marked volunteers navigating the procession and distributing the programme... Despite the festive and emotional nature of the event, there were, however, instances of excesses by media representatives. The event was comprehensively covered by news teams - public television, radio and also private stations. The assertive behaviour of some reporters, inadequate to the context, set a precedent for subsequent faculty events: stricter rules were set for media representatives, and some events were denied media access at all.

Especially obvious was the good organization quality evident at the end of the procession, on Palach Square, in front of the Faculty of Arts. Several thousand participants must have crowded here, the memorial fire (which will burn here for a month) was lit ceremoniously,[19] and a choir sang on the steps of Rudolfinum, Prague's most important concert hall. Its brief performance, barely 15 minutes long, is well worth mentioning. The singers were

from two independent choirs: the choir of Charles University and the choir of the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts. The very fact of their joint performance just a few days after the tragedy well demonstrates the urgency with which people engaged in commemorative activities in the first days and weeks. The sound of the choir, distinct but not deafening, testified to the professional sound system and sound engineering. Particularly eloquent was the repertoire[20] of Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus*, the oldest surviving Czech sacred song, *Hospodine pomiluj ny,* and the meditative song of the ecumenical community in Taizé, France, *V temnotách našich dnu.*The universally known *Ave verum* with the transcendent hope in the last verses opened up a space of common perception. While the musical language of *Hospodine, pomiluj ny* - medieval tune in a monophonic setting - is undoubtedly very different from the musical experience of most listeners, the fact that it is one of the oldest documents of the culture to which it relates and of which Charles University is a bearer was the hallmark of this issue. The third song was of a quite different character: it is a song intended to be sung together. That is why its lyrics[21] was on the printed programs handed out by volunteers during the procession, and why the choir sang it first between the "*Ave Verum*" and then again after *"Lord have mercy,"* each time in many repetitions, so that the participants in the assembly could join in. The fact that relatively few people joined in can be interpreted in various ways: from the "hushed" mood of the whole assembly, to the reluctance or inability of the Czechs to participate in musical performances they did not know well, to the spatial arrangement that separated the choir from the others - thus creating a kind of imaginary barrier to participation. But in each case, the choir's singing showed the role music can play in collective grieving and healing.

Partial Access to the Faculty

On January 21, 2024, one month after the tragedy, the so-called "reopening" of the faculty took place. This event was also a "reopening" in terms of organisational structure. Although the institution called the event as such, the complete program was provided by volunteers - teachers and students, mostly those from the language departments. The fact that students and the public could enter the main building of the Faculty of Arts for one day was seen as an integral part of the healing process. The media were strictly prohibited from attending the event (filming was only allowed until 30 minutes before the event started, after which any use of professional equipment was prohibited) and participation required prior online registration. Approximately 300 people turned up, although registration was not effectively checked.

After a short introduction at the memorial fire in the midst of freezing weather (-10 °C), the faculty was opened. The whole event was held in a very peaceful atmosphere, with the Charles University choir singing in the corridors. The chosen compositions - *Smetana's "Veno" [The Dowry]* and the folk songs "*Mikulecká dedina*" *[Mikulecká village]* and "*Což se mne, má milá*" *[Which to me, my dear]* - may not belong to the listening mainstream of today's students, but both their selection and their classical interpretation (in Turino's presentation mode, Turino 2008: 51) created a kind of aural sense of expectancy and therefore security. Only the ground floor was accessible - the staircase to the upper floors was guarded by the security agency Crowd Safety.[22] Faculty volunteers and psychology students, were on hand to provide psychological help; free coffee and small pastries were available. There was a calm and friendly, almost intimate atmosphere, but this was only made possible by the considerable efforts of the Rector's board behind the scenes, as R. commented:

"They started to get political actors involved…. And it was clear to us that unless we come up with a framework that sends a clear signal that we are in firm control of the situation, in the sense that there is an official structure that is coordinating something and that needs to be addressed, there will be clear tendencies and efforts to actually like steal it. And that's what happened."[23]

The Politicization of the Monthly Anniversary

The interest of political leaders in officially joining the commemoration is evident from the official draft programme drawn up by the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, which was emailed to those interested in the events at the faculty in winter 2024:[24]

"One Month After" - a symbolic commemoration of the brutal act at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. The aim is to "open" the building and show public solidarity.

"There are two planes - physical and virtual. The physical one takes place on Palacký [sic!] Square,[25] in the faculty building and at other Czech universities; its primary addressee is the academic sphere and its goal is a return to everyday life. The virtual plane represents a society-wide event produced by public television and live transmission from various locations that will be connected in this way."

The proposed programme included:
1. Opening on Palach Square
2. Speaking from the balcony and launching the sound installation "Opening" and inviting to enter the building
3. Physically opening the door and starting the "Opening" sound installation
4. Live broadcast of students entering the building on a large screen in the square
5. Speech in the main hall
6. Student band starting inside, ending the installation "Opening "
7. Joining other musical ensembles from the Czech Republic in the motto "you never play alone" in a live TV broadcast on the big screen in the square
8. Expression of gratitude
9. Czech national anthem performed by virtually connected orchestras playing synchronously during the live broadcast, with the finale in front of the silhouette of Prague Castle, where Band of the Castle Guards and the Police of the Czech Republic will play
10. "Ode to Joy" performed by the Music of the Band of the Castle Guards and the Police of the Czech Republic, with a real-time connection of other "state" orchestras of the European Union countries on a split screen in the square

Thanks to the intensive work of the rector's board, this rather self-servingly pompous concept was avoided.

Mahler's Third Symphony - Czech Philharmonic, January 30, 2024

Another event, very formal and carefully organized, was the Czech Philharmonic's dress rehearsal for Mahler's Symphony No.3 on January 30, 2024. The Czech Philharmonic, whose headquarters - the Rudolfinum - is adjacent to the building of the Faculty of Arts, thus expressed local solidarity with the affected institution. Although the choice of this majestic composition, one of the longest in the regular symphonic repertoire, was not related to the tragedy at the Faculty of Arts, its meditative character with a final movement dedicated to "heavenly love" seemed very appropriate and was perceived as such not only by many listeners but also by the musicians in the orchestra.[26]

Prior registration for the event was required and available exclusively to students and faculty members. The event was dedicated "to all staff, students and supporters of the Faculty of Arts as a symbol of deep belonging and hopefully a milestone on the road to recovery." The event was not publicly announced, was designed to be invitation-only, and attendees had to register via an online form. Those without registration were not allowed in, this time under close supervision right at the entrance to the Rudolfinum. The event was almost entirely full; however, the recommended dress code was not always strictly observed (photo by the soloist).

After the concert in the Rudolfinum, a brass quintet played Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" and other popular pieces of the classical repertoire in front of the building. When asked who they were and why they chose to play here, the young musicians said they were students of the Conservatory (which is located in the immediate vicinity, literally a block away) and wanted to express their solidarity with the Faculty of Arts. It was also the last day of the "Month for the Faculty," and thus the final day and evening of the memorial bonfire on Jan Palach Square.

A Quiet Place

The final step before the full resumption of normal academic life at the faculty was the establishment of the so-called Quiet Place on May 24th 2024.[27] This was set up in the rear wing of the fourth floor, which was most intensely affected by the shooting. It consisted of two smaller classrooms and a corridor between them. Now, for the first time in more than five months, the entire fourth floor was opened to the public. The quiet place - two smaller classrooms and the corridor between them (see photos) - was open every weekday from 9am to 6pm, with a daily ritual at noon led by the group "To the Roots," which specialises in alternative funeral rituals. There were 14 stones placed in the corridor, one for each victim, and cork boards hung on the walls where visitors could leave their messages. In two classrooms, now ceremonial rooms, the aforementioned rituals were held each day, a silent ceremony in one room and (a room with) musical accompaniment in the other.

Clear and written rules were established for the Silent Place: it was dedicated exclusively to commemorative activities, visitors were to behave quietly and it was forbidden to make audiovisual recordings for use in public media. The midday ritual consisted of a symbolic purification by water - anyone present could "wash away the bad stuff" with water poured into a symbolic well - as a counterpoint to the memorial fire that burned outside the building throughout January. An impromptu piano lesson followed.

We are the only two visitors in the room, then a pianist and two women performing a cleansing ritual. Soft piano tones resound through the room, it is a minimalist improvisation in a pentatonic scale with a meditative atmosphere. The music has no fixed order, it flows like water from a carafe poured by one of the ceremonial women into a metal well.

On December 11, 2024, the official transformation of the Quiet Place back to normal operations began. An audiovisual performance by former musicology department member Michal Rataj and artist Patrik Habel attracted approximately 50 people. It was presented as "part of the process of transforming the space in the context of other events held on the one-year anniversary of the tragic events of December 21, 2023."[28]

Figure 5. The piano performance after the ritual in the Quiet Place (Author O.P.).

Student Initiatives

As mentioned above, on the very next day after the shooting, a wreath-laying ceremony for the tragically deceased took place in front of Karolinum, the oldest building of Charles University, which today serves mainly for ceremonial purposes. Around a hundred people gathered there to light candles and honour the memory of the victims. According to P., a musicology student I interviewed in April 2024, the scene was filled with deep sorrow and pain. She went there because the morning after the tragedy she realized, "I can't be alone here at home. I just need to be with these people."[29] After the memorial act, P. and her friends went for a drink at a nearby café in the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts (DAMU) building, where they were joined by several students there. Although they had never spoken to each other before, P. described a feeling of instant rapport and solidarity. Towards the evening, they went together to light candles outside the Faculty of Arts building. P. recounts:

> "And there we were still sharing it and we were there together, hugging each other. It was incredible in that even though you don't know these people, you're seeing them for the very first time in your life, still…just the loose solidarity and just generally being with that person, not only do you say I'm here for you and I want to be here for you as much as you're here for me… But you just do it. So that was absolutely incredible. But actually, like, [it was like that] from the beginning. Just from the first moment it all happened."[30]

During those early days after the shooting, the students' needs to actively express themselves and do something together began to form into a creative and practical organisation. They formed a WhatsApp group to share ideas and to discuss organizational matters. P., along with others, welcomed this activity as it alleviated feelings of despair and loneliness. As she said, "It actually helped me the most. I traded one stress for another. If it wasn't for this initiative, I would have just been lying at home depressed."[31]

Just after Christmas, this student initiative contacted the university administration and arranged a meeting with R., a member of the Rector's board. He explained the vision of the

university and suggested ways in which the rector's board could support student activities. At this point, the two initiatives, one led from above and the other from below, connected and began to work together. Both shared a similar vision: to create a space to gather and honour the dead, to be in solidarity and provide safe space to those in need.

Initiative of Musicology Students

he composition of students who wanted to express solidarity with the community in an active and creative way was diverse. Considering the aforementioned death of Lenka Hlávková, the director of the Institute of Musicology at the Faculty of Arts, it is not surprising that students from this institution were among them. However, at first glance their activities were not visible, which surprised us. However, their student organisation FFugatto[32] managed to organise several public events towards the end of the Month for the Faculty:

On January 23rd, a musical meditation was held, followed by an open jam session. Two days later a workshop on medieval music manuscripts was held. The next day a soundwalk was organised in the immediate surroundings of the then still closed faculty. On January 29th, interested people gathered at the memorial fire on Jan Palach Square in front of the faculty for an event called Kytarohraní (Guitar Playing) to sing songs accompanied by guitars.

Each event had its main organizer who was responsible for its successful course, and we also had our first conversations with them. We heard repeatedly that their biggest motivation was the desire to do something meaningful and to create a space for gathering. The activity itself was what helped them bridge this period and what they offered to help others with.

What Was that All About?

One of the main themes of the Month for the Faculty was to support the mental health of the community as part of the renewal of academic life. It was mental health care that inspired T., a PhD student from the Department of Health Sciences to organize a soundwalk around the faculty. He thought that something creative and unifying might be just as necessary and helpful as other activities in this situation.[33] In an intimate group of six participants, including T., we engaged in exercises based on Fluxus Event Scores and undertook a soundwalk of about forty minutes.

> We have several tasks. We're not allowed to talk, we have to focus on what sounds we make when we walk, and then how those sounds translate into the macro soundscape. We can try to walk as accurately in someone's footsteps and as quietly as possible. It is not determined who leads the group, we can follow whoever takes the lead, whoever follows a sound for example. We're supposed to go as a group, but we can keep our distance if we want to. We (6 of us including T.) walked along the river first, it was interesting to see how the communication in our group intensified during the walk, even without speaking. Often we would stop for a few minutes at a certain place and listen. We walked past the Na Rejdišti Conservatory building and continued to the Faculty of Arts and then left to the Pinkas Synagogue. We walked around the back of the Faculty of Arts and climbed the stairs in front and stood for quite some time under the arcade at its entrance. Organically we formed a line and stood completely motionless for some time. We looked ahead of us at Jan Palach Square. Some passers-by kept their eyes on us for a while. [...] At about 2:40 p.m. we arrived back in front of the statue of Antonín Dvořák and we all felt that the walk was over. T broke the silence by asking "So, did the faculty building seem completely silent to you even now?"[34]

T. was referring to our previous discussion about subjective perception of soundscapes. We talked about how the faculty building seemed quiet when viewed from the square - perhaps because we knew what had happened there and that it was now closed. However, as we stood outside its entrance for a longer period of time, the building seemed to resonate with the sounds of what was happening around it. Someone commented that it would be interesting to organize a soundwalk inside the faculty as well. T. appreciated the idea, but admitted that he didn't feel up to returning to the building for the time being, and therefore didn't wonder if it would be possible. During the afternoon, we were encouraged to openly share our feelings and experiences, learning to be more sensitive to our surroundings and to build trust with each other. As the conversation with T. suggests, this was in line with his idea of how relationships and the mental health of faculty students could be strengthened in creative ways after such a traumatic event.

Student P. came up with a different idea to take care of mental health after a traumatic event and organized a musical meditation. Her aim was to offer a safe space for her colleagues to relax to music under the guidance of a music therapist who herself had previously studied at the Institute. However, none of her classmates came to Punctum, a small alternative club in Prague, where the meditation was held. Instead, the club was filled with about twenty "unknown" participants, which surprised P. but did not diminish her perception of the success of the event. Creating something meaningful was more important to her than who took advantage of such an offer and why.

The open jam session, which followed the musical meditation, embodied the idea of meeting and connecting the community through active participation in music. However, for much of the evening, the event was more of an expressive improvisational concert of well-rehearsed and experienced musicians performing in front of a seated audience, and thus would be more likely to fall into the mode of presentation described by Turino (2008). On the other hand, the participatory character, as Turino (2008) understands it, was fully manifested during the Kytarohraní event. In a March 2024 interview, one of the organizers of the event speaks of his motivation as follows, "and I said, OK, let's just come play, like, by the fire on the guitar, let's just make it a commemorative event, it'll be nice, people can sing songs they know."[35] On the impetus for creating the event, he says, "some kind of bringing those people together, reconnecting, and just kind of letting each other know, look, we're here, we're thinking about it, and we're just all in it at the same time."[36] Those goals were also summed up on the event's Facebook page with the sentence, "With this simple ritual, we want to honour their memory and light an eternal fire of remembrance and mutual solidarity in everyone's hearts."[37]

> It's dark, cold and foggy, but still almost forty of us are here. In the circle around the memorial fire, the old familiar campfire tunes are to be heard - classics by Wabi Darek, Karel Kryl, but also songs by Buta or Olympic. The order and what songs will be played is not given in advance - everything is arranged ad hoc and selected from the well-known songbook "Já písnicka ." What will be played is determined in accordance with the audience by one of the guitarists - I recognize him from musicology. At least the choruses are sung by almost everyone gathered here; those who don't know the lyrics hold a phone in their frozen hands and read from it. After more than an hour, everyone decides it's too cold and the whole group moves to the Green Tea Room,[38] where the singing continues in a similar vein.[39]

The type of activities and music chosen cannot be considered explicitly commemorative in the sense of music commonly associated with rituals related to death. However, as in Thompson and Biddle's example, the formation of its memorial nature can be viewed through the relationships between bodies, which they understand as entities with unique 'affective capacities' (2013:9). That is, bodies can affect others and be affected themselves. What we saw during these events, however, was not only the explicit commemoration of the victims, but also the sharing of affect, which manifested itself in a sense of belonging, solidarity and joy, which here music facilitated as an effective means and was what helped the community to 'heal.'

Negotiations

Two events that had an explicitly spiritual dimension illustrate the complexity of negotiating commemorative and "healing" events in the public space of a university. As a state institution, the university faces a dual challenge: to maintain a secular character compatible with the modern nation-state, while allowing for the expression of spirituality in a crisis situation requiring processing and coping with death.

Shortly after the tragedy, a question arose among the faculty as to whether a prayer and spiritual gathering could be held on the campus to facilitate the return to the building of those interested in such a form.[40] This idea was brought up by D., a history student, who feared that unless they took the initiative into their own hands, nothing of the sort would take place on the premises of the Faculty of Arts. She describes her need to organize the event as one of her personal ways of dealing with the shooting at the faculty.

D. contacted other friends from the faculty and they started a group chat on Messenger. The people in this group didn't even know each other, but they shared a Christian faith. One of them was also in contact with the organizers of the Month for the Faculty and through that with the faculty leadership. At one meeting they proposed the idea together and discussed its possible implementation. D. notes:

> "For one thing, it was very good that there were some non-believers there, which we could use as a mirror, to ask them what they thought about it. Which was important because they told us things like: Yeah hey cool, but first of all we would like to make it look like it's not organized by the faculty, like officially, but by you. So that it's not publicized, and that it's very much like a wide-open, ecumenical thing."[41]

Doing it ecumenically may have been D.'s plan from the beginning, but even among her classmates, she said, there was confusion and there were "even spikes [...] about how broadly to do it."[42] In the end, the prayer was divided into two main parts. The first, communal part alternated between speeches and prayers by four clergy from different Christian traditions and a representative of the Jewish community, with a communal singing of about fifty participants. They sang from the hymnbook *Svítá,*[43] with the organizers accompanying them on guitar and double bass. The second part was free, where visitors could choose from several rooms that offered different forms of prayer. The Facebook event described these options as "singing together, silent contemplation, petitions and thanksgiving, meditation on texts, or any form of your own.[44]

As D. describes it, participants could attend the prayer that was closest to their heart, or they did not have to attend the first or second part at all. They tried to make the event as

neutral as possible, so as not to "divide people,"[45] and the appropriate means for this was prayer in word and prayer in song. The most visited room was the one dedicated specifically to singing, with as many as twenty of us gathered at one point. There were only a few copies of the hymn book *Svítá*, from which D. selected songs she believed were familiar across different denominations. She herself accompanied the singing on guitar and was a little taken aback that she had prepared so few songbooks - she had only counted on a few people. She said she didn't even know many of the participants, but was all the more pleased to see how many of them joined in the singing. At the request of those who came, songs that were not in the original plan were then sung, which D. welcomed.

In this case, the university as an institution retained control over the general framework of the commemoration, even though the initiative and the specific form of the event was largely the work of students. The inclusivity of the ecumenical prayer at the faculty can be interpreted through the plurality of possibilities, which in a secular context represents an attempt to allow individuals to find their own way of spiritual expression (Kaene, 2013; Taylor, 2007).

The Department of Religious Studies also came up with a proposal to hold a purification ritual at the faculty shortly after the shooting. Others in the faculty leadership, however, saw the idea as susceptible to media misinterpretation and potential scandalization as 'esoteric.'

Members of the Department of Religious Studies later organized a Ritual Re-entry for themselves, during which they ceremonially sprinkled the faculty with holy water and sang the song "Gently Johnny" from the movie "*The Wicker Man*" together. The song, which comes from a folk horror film in which a man is sacrificed, had a special meaning to the organizers that was unclear to us. The very choice of this song may seem somewhat surprising in the context of the tragedy, which only emphasizes that its symbolism was shaped within a particular community and reflected what united the participants in this ritual.

The events of the Month for the Faculty correspond with the community's need to heal, reconnect and move forward. Although many organizers have expressed a desire to continue similar activities, none have been repeated in this same vein. This suggests that these events successfully created a transitional, healing period and allowed the community to move on to the next chapter.

At Borderline
As is evident from the preceding pages, our direct participation in the Month for Faculty and in the events immediately following allowed us to examine from different perspectives the situation immediately after the society found itself in the face of an unexpected, powerful trauma, a situation surprisingly little reflected in the literature. As ethnomusicologists, we were primarily interested in the workings of music.

Why is the position of music in strengthening the community of the academy not enough to be interpreted only through the prism of semiotics, for example by incorporating Turino's concepts of participatory and presentational performance (Turino 2008: 23 n.)? At the events we witnessed, the audience and participants formed such a heterogeneous group that a sense of belonging could not arise solely through shared meanings or prior experiences, as a semiotic approach would suggest. Moreover, the repertoire was partly shaped

at the last minute, which further weakened this possibility. *Affect* – the shared experience of mourning, powerlessness, but also solidarity – seems to be an appropriate explanatory concept. Indeed, singing together strengthens relationships and evokes a sense of belonging, and this is helped by the shared interpretation of signs (often difficult to imagine in the case of thousands of students); however, the atmosphere itself plays a key role. It is not easily grasped or fully translatable into symbols (language) - it is something that is felt rather than interpreted. The unifying atmosphere is evident even in the distinct absence of music, for example during the silent procession during the Faculty Embrace.

But as Ana Hofman points out, affect does not necessarily stand in opposition to semiotic and discursive approaches: '*I believe that the affective turn's productive potential does not lie in abandoning the semiotic, representational and discursive paradigms, but in the production of meeting points for the semantic and affective dimensions/venues at the site of the sound experience*' (2015: 48). In other words, affect and meaning-laden agency meet and interact in musical experience. Singing or attending a concert together is therefore not only a question of participation or shared understanding of meanings, but also a question of an intense affective experience that circulates between people and connects them.

The second line we followed, which proved to be important for later musical activities, was the line of negotiation of the form of events. From the beginning, the strong role of the institution - the university (manifested by its leaders, and especially by its representatives, i.e. the rector and the dean) - was evident (and confirmed by the interview with a member of the Rector's board), both in relation to external actors (the media and the political representation) and internally, in relation to the students and its initiatives. Indeed, our role as "documentary filmmakers," initiated by the Rector's board, was also understood in this sense. When the stone monument was erected in front of the building of the Faculty of Arts on June 21st, half a year after the tragic event,[46] a new chapter in our understanding of the approach to the event began: the chapter of commemoration. On the pedestal of the memorial there is a QR code leading to short cards of all the victims. For the first time we read their names, for the first time we see their faces. In the following months, the role of the institution strengthens, while spontaneous, especially student activities recede.[47] At the "transformation:" of the Silent Place into a regular faculty operation in December 2024, we witness an audiovisual performance by two nationally recognized artists. The tendency to formalize culminates in the commemoration of the first anniversary of the tragedy: a documentary film about the families of some of the victims,[48] the publication of a book of poems by one of them, a newly discovered microorganism named after another, the creation of two new compositions to be performed at the anniversary concert (which will be attended by the President of the Republic on December 21, 2024). One cannot but recall Jan Assmann's concepts of communicative and cultural memory (2001, orig. 1997). He uses them to explain different ways of preserving memories. The carriers of *communicative memory* are the witnesses of the event. Their memories (and, in our terms, their ways of coping with them) are diverse, none more guaranteed than the other. But then - in Assmann's view, after the eyewitnesses have died - *cultural memory* comes into play. This 'collapses' the originally multidimensional, often ambiguous memory into 'symbolic figures' (Assmann 2001: 50); factual history is transformed into remembered history. The performance of memory is understood by special bearers: ...*shamans, bards and griots, just as priests, teachers, artists, writers, scholars...* (Assmann 2001: 51). Assmann, however, in his conception only envisaged the linear passage of time as a fundamental factor in the transformation of memory. We are witnessing how an event that is inevitably moving away from us, and after

which only memory remains, is understood by the most powerful - perhaps one can even say the most tangential - player, namely the institution, the university. The remembrance of the event is in the hands of specialists - for ethnomusicologists, most significantly, professional composers and performers. In the next chapter it will be possible to examine how they have dealt with the memory.

Endnotes

1 The title is an echo of Marek Vácha's lecture "Academia Wounded but not Broken," delivered at the Charles University on March 5, 2024.

2 We took part in the research together, we discussed it continuously, but we divided the specific formulation of each topic. Jurková authored the introduction and conclusion, Podebradský's text begins with Spontaneous Solidarity, and Gulová wrote about the students' initiatives.

3 It is considered unusual that no names appear - neither of the murderer nor of the victims.

4 Social or cultural anthropology is taught at three faculties of Charles University: the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Social Sciences.

5 Email correspondence from the constituent group on 12/29/2025. The formulation was also addressed to the Board of the Chancellor.

6 The participation of academics and students fluctuated slightly, so the numbers varied.

7 This included repeated interventions offered by psychologists, but also the modification of study plans according to the needs of the students concerned, etc.

8 Shortly after the shooting, there were doubts that it would be possible to start normal faculty operations on the regular date, February 19.

9 Jurková, Zuzana: Pražské hudební svety: Hudba a kolektivní vzpomínán v dnešní Praze. Prague: Karolinum 2025.

10 E.g. Fauser - Figueroa 2020, Bin Xu 2016.

11 We are encouraged to propose two interpretatively different theories by the generally accepted polysemantic character of the broad phenomenon known as music.

12 Probably from the turn of the 10th and 11th centuries.

13 Thomson and Biddle open their text with a description of the British riots initiated by government efforts to cut public spending and raise tuition fees in 2010. During these riots, mainstream pop music was played, which seemed ill-suited to political protests. Interviewee MC Tempz explained its use: 'it's not about content, it's about energy and aura' (p. 5). And it is the term 'aura' that the authors identify with affect.

14 Pardubice is a university and statutory town in eastern Bohemia.

15 Interview with R. 3.28.2024

16 Interview with R. 3.28.2024

17 One of the major squares in the very heart of historical Prague Old Town

18 https://www.ff.cuni.cz/2024/01/nam-vsem-pietni-pruvod-objeti-fildy/ date of access 2.25.2025

19 The wood for the fire was donated from the Lány Game Preserve, the summer residence of the President of the Republic.

20 According to an interview with members of the choir, the repertoire was chosen in a discussion between the choirmaster and the choir.

21 The Czech version of "In the darkness of our days light the fire that never goes out, never goes out in us" was sung, which differs little from the French original.

22 A large Czech security agency owned by the aforementioned Martin Beck, providing protection and organisation especially at large music events such as AC/DC or Rammstein concerts at Letnany airport or summer festivals.

23 Interview with R. 3.28.2024

24 Internal material shared by the Documentation Month Task Force for faculty.

25 A completely different square in different Prague district

26 E.g. oral communication of JP, violist of the CF.

27 According to information shared by the documentation team, the Quiet Place was originally scheduled to open on May 21, 2024, again on the "anniversary" date. The authors do not know the reason for the three-day delay.

28 https://www.ff.cuni.cz/2024/12/promenu-ticheho-mista-na-hlavni-budove-filozoficke-fakulty-uk-zahaji-umelecka-performance/ date of access 3.3.2025

29 Interview with P. 4.15.2024

30 Interview with P. 4.15.2024

31 Interview with P. 4.15.2024

32 Until then, this initiative was rather in its beginnings; the events of the Month for the Faculty actually set Fugatto in motion in a way, as we learn from the interviews

33 Interview with T. 1.26.2024

34 Field notes ZG

35 Interview with Y. 3.20.2024

36 Interview with Y. 3.20.2024

37 https://www.facebook.com/events/683733673926926 dostupné 2.25.2025

38 One of the modular buildings on Jan Palach Square

39 Field notes OP

40 Prayers had already been held outside the faculty premises, but the aim was to bring such an event directly onto the faculty premises

41 Interview with D. from 6.13.2024

42 Interview with D. from 6.13.2024

43 GRUBER Jirí. SVÍTÁ. *Krestanské písnicky (nejen) pro mládež*. 1. vyd. Praha: Kalich, 1992. 610 s. ISBN 80-7072-001-8. A hymnal used mainly by the youth of Protestant churches.

44 Faculty of Arts, Charles University. 2024. "Ecumenical Prayer." Facebook event, March 11, 2024. https://www.facebook.com/events/1327099484646706 [Accessed February 9, 2025].

45 Interview with D. from 6.13.2024

46 The form of the memorial was again the result of negotiations, this time, according to the film "How the World Didn't Stop," primarily by the university in consultation with the sculptor Adamec, and the survivors.

47 In at least two conversations with student organizers, there was an intention to repeat the event. However, this did not happen later.

48 The film "How the World Didn't Stop," see https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/16234768583-jak-to-ze-se-svet-nezastavil/, includes information about a collection of poems or a newly discovered microorganism.

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Ensemble Music for Social and Emotional Development:

A Case Study of Primary School Children in a Suburban Malaysian Chinese Community

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Abstract

Music forms part of the Malaysian national curriculum for primary education, but music education is often compromised by low community interest, resulting in children's under-exposure to musical training. This qualitative study examines the inclusivity, creativity, and sustainability of a community-initiated children's choral-instrument ensemble established as an after-school, weekly activity in suburban Malaysia, where members were recruited from lower- to middle-income families, and had little means to pursue music otherwise. Data were collected from class observations, children's "before-after" drawings, and semi-structured interviews with the stakeholders. The trustworthiness and validity were ensured through inter-rating, member checks, and data triangulation. The findings revealed that the program transformed children with little knowledge of music into confident musicians capable of performing both local and classical genres, including rearranged renditions of Palladio and Dikir Barat within a year. It suggests that well-facilitated ensemble-based musical instruction sustains the positive development of social and emotional skills in children.

Keywords: *Choral Music, Children's Instrumental, Suburban, Malaysia, Creativity, Inclusivity*

Introduction

Music courses are part of the Malaysian national curriculum for primary education. However, in an interview with the New Straits Times' journalist, music professors like Dr. Ramona Tahir of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) and Dr. Mohd Hassan Abdullah from Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) both expressed their concerns that Malaysian society does not foreground music education. The latter also commented on the lack of awareness in Malaysian society about the importance of music education at a young age (Mustafa, 2018). While choral music may still be rehearsed in communal and religious programs, orchestra music is generally perceived as an elitist performance and easily dismissed (Bailey & Davidson, 2005; Rastam, 2021).

Today, the importance of music is emphasized by UNESCO (2019) to promote inclusion, prosperity, and positive change as can be seen from related projects, for example, the Music as a Driver for Sustainable Development Project in Morocco (2018) and World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (12 May 2021). Music is a universal language of cohesion, embodying the power of living heritage to unite humanity around shared values and aspirations. Noel Curran, Director General of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) delineated the direction of 'music diversity' to "inspire audiences daily by showing how natural intercultural connections can be" (EBU, 2021). These projects highlight UNESCO's mission of inclusion advocacy in the World Conference on Education for All to Meeting Basic Learning Needs (UNESCO, 1990), which aims to provide education to all children regardless of their disabilities and with differing abilities.

Choral music educators are urged to reframe educational practices to offer solutions that support music learning for all students (Fuelberth & Todd, 2017). The effort to make ensemble music available for school children to facilitate social and emotional development is crucial for Malaysian society. The inclusivity of music education is also at stake. This study thus seeks to uncover the benefits experienced by the members and stakeholders of a community children's choral-instrument ensemble in the northern region of Malaysia. The children's ensemble was established by a visionary educator who chose to offer choral and orchestral instrument training to interested primary children in his community at affordable fees. Fee waivers were given for children from the bottom 40% (B40) income families.

Literature Review

Music and art can connect people on a deeper level, including their power to create a sense of unity and community (Binson, 2020). Research reveals great emotional, social, and cognitive benefits of group singing and performance, even for the homeless and marginal (Ibid). Apart from its conventional and classical functions to entertain, create aesthetical values, and provide pleasure and relaxation (Levinson, 2024), ensemble music also asserts ethical and educational power in shaping virtue and character (Whitfield, 2010). More importantly, when one engages in music and language, there is a 'mysterious' benefit to the human brain. As Larbib argues, the human brain "can produce and perceive complex hierarchical structures which interweave form and meaning, appreciating each as enriched by the other" (Larbib, 2013, 7).

To note, an ensemble is formed when a group of supporting musicians, singers, dancers, or actors perform together. When two or more people make music together, there are ample opportunities for participants to display group creativity and integrate multiple skills (D'souza, 2019). In the process of creating and advancing new ideas, music ensembles build

a community of inclusivity, receptivity, equity, and celebration (Webster, 2002). When the choir members or an instrument ensemble meet regularly to make music together over some time, social relationships are formed naturally. Members become familiar with each other's communicative behavior (Aucouturier and Cannonne, 2017; Bishop, 2018; Moran et al., 2015). Likewise, when performers across traditions adjust their playing to accommodate new group formations and performing environments, they complement each other's imperfections such as missed notes, attentional lapses, or missed repeats (Glowinski et. al., 2016). Music, along with its embedded messages, is therefore perceived as essential to man's survival and development whereby the nurturing nature of music illumines one's mundane life, edifies and sustains a person's life on earth from the ecological viewpoint (Sloan and Harding, 2021; Titon, 2009). Moreover, local music culture plays a vital role in preserving the history and cultural heritage of ethnic groups. Phongnil (2023) points to the power of music performance in facilitating the interplay between community, environment, and technology, and making the participants move as one body. Pongsarayuth (2023) ascribes sound and melodies as powerful agents for interpersonal communication, thus, enhancing mental health and the quality of life of music participants.

Based on the above literature review, D'souza's (2019) emphasis on group creativity in skills integration, and Webster's (2002) concepts of inclusivity and equity are deemed the most important criteria that underpin this study on a choral-instrument ensemble. An initial conceptual framework for the study is as follows:
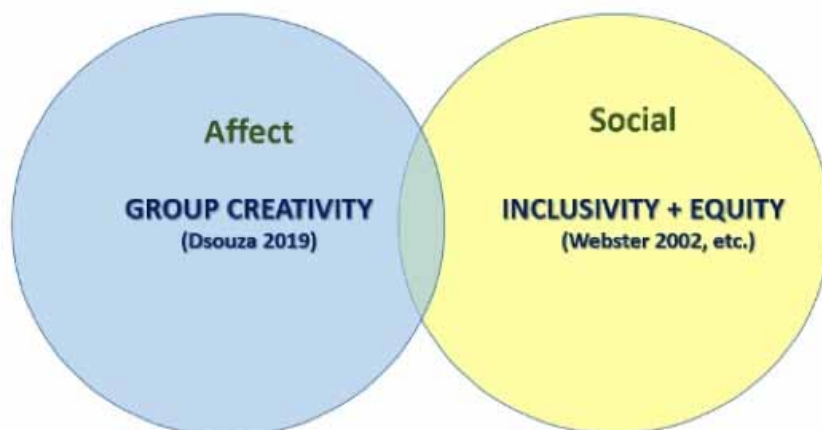
Figure 1. The initial framework for community choral or music ensembles from the literature review.

In Malaysia, the Ministry of Education has made music a compulsory subject in Malaysian primary schools since 1983 (Abdullah, 1990). There were ups and downs in the implementation of music curriculum in the primary schools, due to the changes of emphasis in Malaysia's national educational interest. Meanwhile, the Standard Curriculum for World Music was introduced to facilitate a multicultural, integrated curriculum in 2011 (Wong, Pan, & Shah, 2015). In 2020, the Science, Technology, Reading, Arts and Music (STREAM) was introduced as the Secondary School Standard Curriculum (KSSM), with three elective music course subjects namely the "Music Theory & Aural Skills," "Musical Instruments," and "Computer music" for interested students (Landau & Dermawan, NST, Nov. 30, 2019).

Holistically, these developments reflect the desire to cultivate musical talents, creativity, and inclusivity and to provide Malaysian children with exposure to a wide range of world music genres (Wong, Pan, & Shah, 2015). However, there have been concerns about whether

Malaysian schools have enough expertise to teach music courses (NUTP president Aminuddin Awang in NST, ibid). Moreover, despite the provision in the curriculum, music has rarely been emphasized in Malaysian schools. The 30-minute music class per week in the primary classrooms teaches very basic rhythmic recognition, basic singing, and the recorder (Ismail et. al., 2021) which seems inadequate for developing musical skills among children. Malaysian parents who are aware of the importance and benefit of music education would have enrolled their children at private music education centers or paid home-based private tutors to teach their children to play the instruments of their choice. However, these private lessons which usually involve one-on-one teaching or small group teaching are expensive. Unfortunately, not all parents can afford to pay for musical instruments needed for the practices and for the years of private music lessons for their children that take years. These considerations prompted the present study which examined the roles of a community choral-instrumental group for Malaysian school-aged children over the pandemic period when schools were forced into lockdown mode. The study examined the children's experiences and aspects related to creativity, inclusivity, and sustainability. The views of the children's parents were also explored. Reflections on the future planning of the ensemble are included.

Methodology

The present study employed full qualitative research methods, i.e., semi-structured interviews, observation, and analysis of children's drawings about their ensemble experience. The research site was a town in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia. The weekly ensemble practices were normally conducted at the ensemble director's house, and their community court when more space for practice was needed. The research samples were recruited through purposive sampling. The ensemble director was first contacted, and the rest of the target interviewees were approached through referral by the director, and after getting their consent. 10 out of 12 ensemble children who met the inclusion criteria were interviewed in groups of two or three and in the presence of at least one of their parents. A parental consent form for each child was also obtained. Parents who were interviewed also signed their respective consent forms.

The inclusion criteria for children interviewees were simple: Children around primary school age (6 -12 years old), with or without a music background, living in the Kampar Baru neighborhood who were committed to participating in the weekly 2-hour ensemble programs for at least a year, and considered a full ensemble member by the group. Children below or above primary school-aged who are not part of the Kampar Baru community and have difficulty participating in group music practices and performances regularly were excluded from the samples. Two children were excluded as they did not meet the inclusion criteria. The salary bracket of the parents of the ensemble members was not emphasized at the point of recruitment, but it turned out that all except children from two families were from the B40 financial background in this study.

Data were collected through observations on rehearsal and performance videos, analysis of 10 ensemble children's drawings depicting their pre- and post-ensemble experiences, as well as semi-structured interviews with the ensemble members, music instructor, and the director. The reason for choosing to analyze children's drawings as one of the data collection methods, on top of semi-structured interviews with them, was out of the following considerations: First, the drawings of young children give insights into their social and emotional as well as intellectual development, as advised by Farokhi and Hashemi (2011)

who were experienced in research involving children. Second, primary school children of vernacular background might be too shy to speak up, which was the case when they were approached by the researchers. Getting them to draw their ensemble and explain their experience as ensemble members was very helpful for them to express themselves better during the interviews.

The children's drawings were analyzed with reference to guidelines suggested by Farokhi and Hashemi (2011) such as choice of colors, shapes, bold or faint expressions, repetitions and so forth. The elaboration given by the children during their interviews was transcribed verbatim and carefully coded and analyzed. To create a comfortable environment for the interviews, children interviewees were paired in groups of two or three and interviewed for 30-45 minutes in the presence of at least one of their parents via Google Meet or Zoom online platforms. Thematic analysis which requires "analytical sensibility" as reminded by Braun & Clarke (2013) was applied when interpreting the data through the generation of initial codes, categorization of codes, and finally, the development of themes.

In qualitative research, the reliability or trustworthiness of data analysis refers to the consistency of data coding by multiple coders. The discrepancies in codes by different researchers were discussed, modified, rated and agreed upon by the research team by voting. The validity of this qualitative study was ensured by conducting member checks with the interviewees after the records of their inputs were made, peer examination among the research team members, and triangulation of three qualitative methods, involving class observation, analysis of the children's drawings, and semi-structured interviews with the director, teacher, and stakeholders.

Findings

With the consent of their parents, each ensemble member explained the content (representation) of their "before-after joining the ensemble" drawings. The following themes were derived after careful analysis of qualitative data from observation, children's drawings, and semi-structured interviews with the children and their parents:

1. Before-after Experience

Nearly all ensemble members had little musical training at the point of their joining. When attending their weekly ensemble program, they were trained by the teacher and their more talented peers, which will be discussed further in the "Peer tutoring and leadership" subsection. Upon the request of the researchers, the ensemble and parents gave consent for the children to produce drawings about their "before-after" ensemble experience. Their drawings were used during the interview session as conversation starters, and to facilitate the children's elaboration during the interview.

(a) Enhanced social experience: From "unpleasant" individual life to "pleasant" group life
F01, aged 6, learned singing, piano, and violin after joining the ensemble. Her before-after drawing showed her emotional attachment to music at the mention of the ensemble. In the "after" section, she drew a grand piano. Wearing a blue gown, she stood by the piano, and the ambiance was enhanced by special lighting, indicating that she was going to perform. When asked to describe the difference between before joining the ensemble and after joining, she said, "Before, I could only do homework (referring to the picture). After, I can play

piano. I am happy." As a child coming from a moderate-income family, F01 did not have the opportunity to own a grand piano. The imaginary grand piano in her picture was a 5-octave keyboard her parents bought for her after joining the ensemble. During the interview session, F01 further explained that she was "happy" because she had friends to make music together. Her father supported her testimony, adding that whenever he dropped her off at the ensemble practice site, she would leap out of the car excitedly.

Figure 2. 'Before-after' drawing by F01 (aged 6).

Drawings from other ensemble children captured the same tone of enhanced emotional experience, the "social" aspect in their group music-making. The drawings from M05 (aged 10), and F06 (aged 10), for example, showed crying faces (before) and happy faces (after), respectively. Both ascribed their experience to the acceptance of the group: "I got friends there," said M05. Yet another ensemble member M02, aged 7, also drew a sad face (before) and a smiling face (after). Pointing to the speech balloons in his drawings, he explained that: "In the 'before' picture, other people commented my playing was 'not good,' but in the 'after,' I said to myself, 'good.'" He exulted in a sense of pride when saying it.
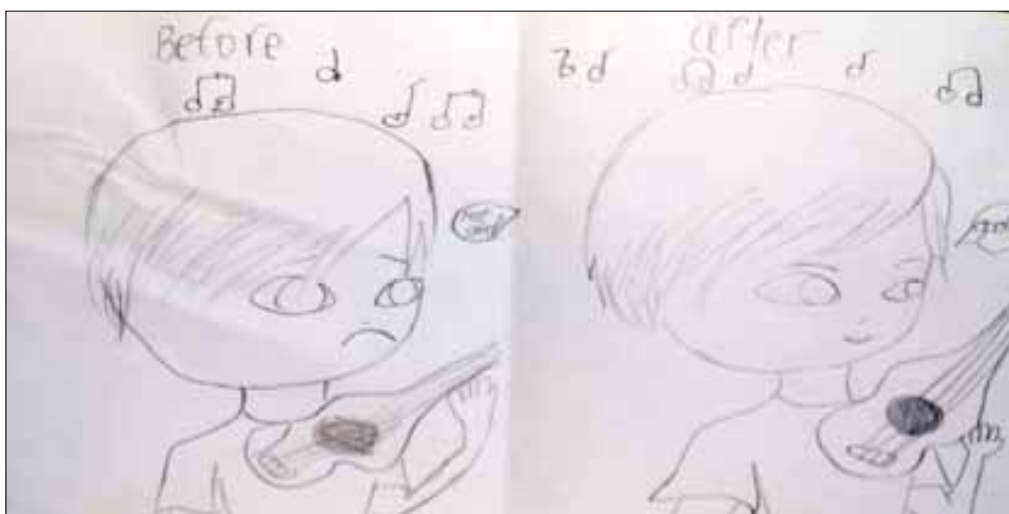
Figure 3. 'Before-after' drawing by M02 (aged 7).

Before joining the ensemble, M02 briefly learned a musical instrument but could not recall what instrument it was. He said he quit playing that stringed instrument because it hurt his fingers. When he first joined the ensemble, he learned to play the ukulele. Following that, he picked up the violin and fell in love with the instrument again.

(b) New-found interest: From purposeless free time to purpose-driven music practices
Interestingly, these children also expressed the changes in their purposeless free time to music-driven activities in their leisure time. Accordingly, they have also changed their end-less browsing of digital devices to music practices, fully motivated by their own interest. Their accounts informed the enhanced "affect" aspect of their participation in their choral-instrumental ensemble. F09, aged 12, described her "before" habits as "lying on the sofa and playing with the cellphone;" whereas her "after" habits were "playing the piano when I am free," and "learning new songs." She recounted she had "never practiced music pieces" on her own before developing her newfound interest in music after joining the ensemble. When asked whether her parents had bought a grand piano for her, she explained, "No, I have a keyboard." So, the grand piano in her picture was a projection and representation of 'piano' being a big part of her world now, just as in the drawing of F01, aged 6.
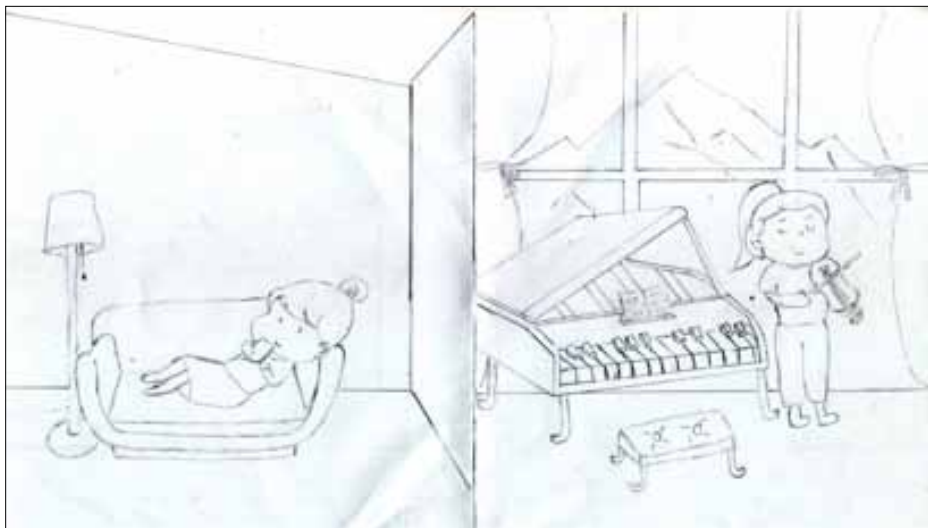
Figure 4. 'Before-after' drawing by F09 (aged 12).

Showing the transformation from attachment to digital devices to a musical instrument, the drawing of M07, aged 10 was one of the most telling. In his "before"' illustration, he had an iPad on one hand, and a cellphone on another, with his thought captions, i.e., "Play!!! Yeah!!!" He also drew a big thought bubble containing a musical stand and a few musi-cal instruments. Each of them was tagged with "No!!!," signaling M07 had no thoughts of playing any musical instruments before joining the ensemble. For the "after" drawing, he showed himself playing the violin, and his teacher who stood beside him, smaller size than him in the drawing, clapped with a speech balloon, "Very good!!!" According to M07, he found himself highly motivated to excel in music after joining the ensemble, "In my free time, I browse the Internet to look for new scores to recommend to the ensemble. I like to play music. I want to be known (for my musical talents)."
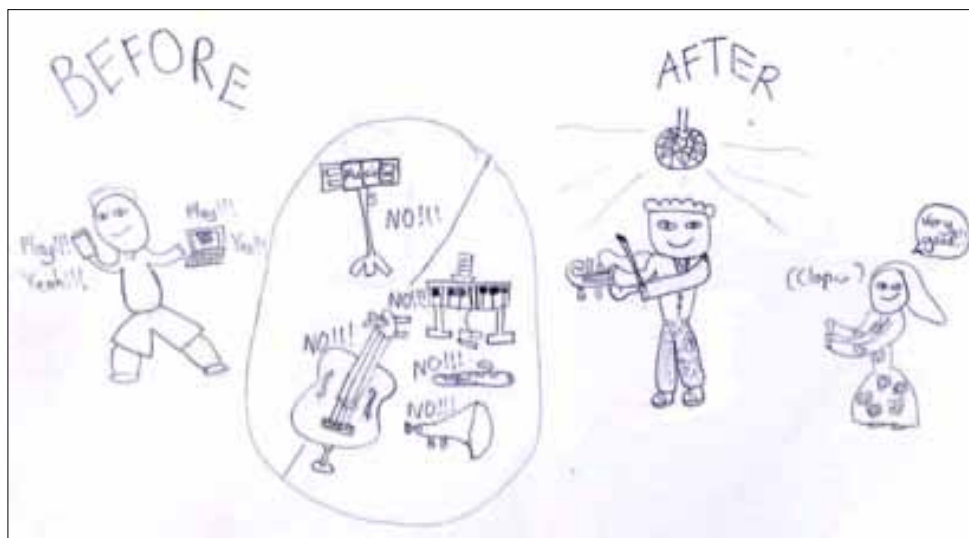
Figure 5. 'Before-after' drawing by M07 (aged 10).

(c) Growing skills: From no musical background to performance-level music literacy
F08, aged 12, and her sister F10, aged 10 showed the researchers their "before-after" illustrations. They drew the picture together.
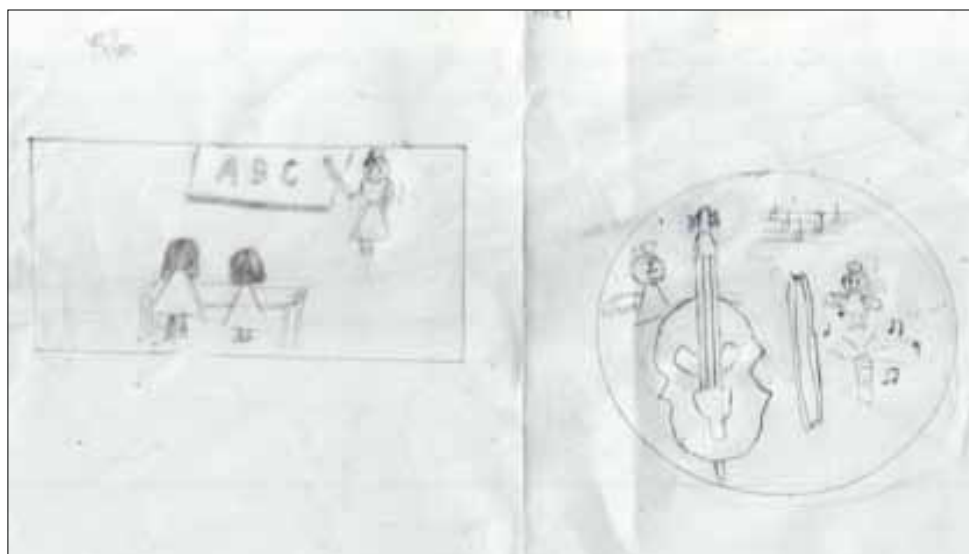
Figure 6. 'Before-after' jointly drawn by F08 (aged 12) and F10 (aged 10).

When asked about their experiences before joining the ensemble, F08 explained that it would be a square shape, simply, going to class and getting home. The "after" experience had much to offer. It is a circle with a violin in the center, and her teacher and the other people within the circle. When probed, F08 explained that the shape was the boundary encompassing everyone involved inside the circle. She said she was only introduced to playing the recorder at school. When she first joined the ensemble, she touched the musical instruments with great caution: "It was my first time touching a violin. I was afraid I accidentally damaged it" (F08).

F08 gradually overcame her anxiety and soaked up musical knowledge like a sponge. She advanced quickly to be the key violinist and viola player in the ensemble. "The teacher is very nice," she smiled saying, "She taught me music, and I can continue to improve it on my own." Agreeing with her, her sister F09 also saw their teachers (referring to the ensemble director and the music teacher) were like "angels." In their drawing, these teachers were dignified with halos and wings, hovering over the violin with musical staff and musical notes.

2. Off-stage and on stage
Several characteristics were observable from the rehearsal and performance videos. The following findings were gathered through video observation and further clarified during the interviews with the ensemble director, music instructor, and the ensemble members.

(a) Peer tutoring and leadership
When the ensemble children were rehearsing or preparing for a performance, it was observed that a lead violinist (M07, aged 10) was always cueing and prompting them to get organized among themselves. He was assuming the role of the Concert Master, as explained during the interview with the Ensemble Director and M07 himself. It is also interesting that this choral-orchestra group acquired some self-organization skills and teamwork skills among the children. Clear leadership and teamwork were certainly displayed in this group, without any prompting from the teachers.

Besides, a peer-tutoring system was also in place. The orchestra members practiced first in their respective sectional grouping, then only in the large group. In general, they were placed in four different "stations." The groups varied from time to time. In general, the stations were run based on musical proficiency. Players of similar proficiency would practice together under the tutelage of their better-skilled member. Weaker members who needed more coaching and those who were assigned soloist roles would be placed under the special care of the music instructor in different stations. Since the budget of the group only allowed one paid music instructor, the instructor would coach by rotation. Interestingly, most of the practicing and tutoring were conducted by peers who developed the skills of other ensemble members.

(b) Community, group synergy, and the 'ecclesia'
During the interview with a member, it was revealed that members looked forward to playing in the ensemble due to the opportunities to socialize with students who had similar interests in music. Several parents and the music instructor also highlighted this factor. Some of the children, missing physical practices, expressed their eagerness for the next session where they can do music with other children again.

> "I miss my friends." (F01, aged 6)

> "My daughter likes the choral group. I have trouble getting her out of the car when dropping her off for school or her childcare. But for the choral group, she can't wait to get out of the car and run in to meet her friends. Haha." (Father of F01)

> "I like going there (the home where the members gather for practice) because I know many friends... After the lockdown, I hope to see many more joining us." (F06, aged 10)

"The children do not just come to play on the instruments. They enjoy social interaction. They want to meet their friends." (Music Instructor, violin and piano teacher)

For the ensemble, the weekly practice had created a strong sense of togetherness and camaraderie among the children, which was sustained through their one-on-one paired weekly practice.

"The ensemble is simply a houseful of musical instruments. Besides the instruments, I now have my circle of friends. It's a life-changing experience for me."
(M07, aged 10)

"I remember our performance at the hotel. Even though I was feeling slightly afraid on the stage, I am okay playing with my friends up there. Our performance was successful."
(F03, aged 9)

The togetherness and sense of belonging among the ensemble members were some of the motivating factors for these children to look forward to playing again. The director described this group spirit as the 'ecclesia.' He explained,

"Ecclesia is a Greek word, meaning 'the gathering of the faithful.' I adopted it as the operating philosophy of the ensemble. as I hope that these kids can grow together and mutually encourage each other well into their adulthood."

The aspiration of the director is likely to materialize as the bond among the students, and their positive development after joining the ensemble was affirmed by a few parents during the interview sessions. e.g., *I think my son built up his communication and social skills at the ensemble.* (Mother of M02)

(c) Improvisation, choreography and creativity
The music repertoire of the ensemble seemed very rich and inclusive. According to the Ensemble Director, in their past performances, they incorporated Dikir Barat (native Malay group singing), nursery rhymes, movie songs, classical music, and other genres.

The sense of empowerment felt by the ensemble members was palpable during the observations and from the recording of the rehearsals and practices. Members, though very young and had little musical training, were encouraged and entrusted to improvise and choreograph their stage performances. They were given the freedom to interpret musical scores and decide on stage positions and other arrangements as they deemed appropriate.

"We think of where we want to stand and how we arrange (ourselves)." (M07, aged 10)

The Ensemble Director explained that the ensemble members could alter the flow of the story or songs that they wanted to perform. The rehearsal video showed exciting verbal exchanges among the members, giving their opinions on aspects of their performance. It was rather refreshing to witness that the ensemble children were not instructed to perform in one way or another. Rather, they had a say in what they would like to showcase. In other words, the ensemble members were highly involved in the stagemanship, choreography, and role distribution for each of their public showcases.

The interview with the Ensemble Director revealed that the ensemble members had to practice on their own with given digital cues and do a one-person recording with the Director whenever the lockdown policy loosened slightly for very small group meetings. After getting the recording with each player, the Director had to edit the clips together to produce highly challenging choral and orchestra performances such as Palladio, Pirates of the Caribbean, Heart of Courage, and Ave Verum Corpus.

(d) Music literacy and affordable fees for music learning
Learning as a group somewhat accelerated their musical training despite the lockdowns caused by the pandemic. Music literacy was developed and promoted without straining the children's own will and interest.

> "My private music students in other centers do not learn as fast as this ensemble. There is power in learning in an ensemble like this. I saw how those with no musical background pick up when they feel like they want to do it with their ensemble friends. Some of these children are advancing very fast. They can perform rather challenging musical pieces within a considerable short period of learning time." (Music instructor)

> "I want to learn violin because my sister is there too." (F04, aged 9)

Besides enjoying the comfort of playing as a group, or playing with friends, the use of animated digital apps for members' practices also played a part in developing members' note-reading and performing skills. The children acquired digital literacy skills for reading musical notes through the use of animated apps, which further developed their interest in practicing on their own.

Figure 7. The use of animated 'Musical Chores' for members' practice.

As discussed, one main barrier to learning music was the high cost of private lessons conducted one-on-one and in small groups. One of the most revealing findings of the present study was that learning music through the ensemble was affordable to the parents. During the interview, the mother of F08 and F10 said that the members of the ensemble paid low tuition fees to learn the instruments. The teachers ensured that the fees were kept very affordable to encourage children of low-income and single-income families to join the ensemble and play an instrument. The parent explained that her daughters were paying very nominal fees, and if they had to take private lessons, it would not have been possible

for them to take music lessons. The teachers ensured that musical training was accessible to as many children as possible, following the inclusivity policy of taking children with any or limited musical abilities.

Limitation of the Study
This study is not without its limitations. The sample only consisted of a community children's choral-instrument ensemble in a suburban Chinese community in Malaysia. While the findings of qualitative research cannot be generalized to all populations, some descriptive data may be "transferred" to understand issues or phenomena of similar contexts, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985, 298). The transferability of qualitative findings was also discussed by recent researchers including Drisko (2024).

Conclusion & Recommendations
The findings from this case study affirm Binson's (2020) concept of community, Schilling's (2017) idea of music aesthetics, Whitefield's (2010) literary proposition, and Larbib's (2013) cognitive development theory. Moreover, the study supports D'souza's (2019) emphasis on group creativity in music learning, music making, and performance curation, which maintain the vibes, dynamism, and sustainability of the ensemble. In addition, The ensemble director of this case study was practically abiding by Webster's (2002) inclusivity and equity principle, as he continuously offered the program at affordable fees or fees waiver to children from the lower-income families.

The study led to the creation of the following framework for the development of musical skills and the setting up of a musical ensemble in the Malaysian education system. The initial framework for community choral or music ensembles from the literature review (FIG. 1) was modified and refined as follows (FIG. 8):

Figure 8. An "Ecclesia" framework of the ensemble deriving from the data findings of the study.

The findings generated by the exploratory study have shown that a musical ensemble is viable as a musical entity that develops a plethora of skills that are often under-developed in classroom settings, for example, creativity, inclusivity, teamwork, and peer mentoring at

a very young age. The mechanism at work, especially the learning environment, freedom, and trust given to members fostered the development of different soft skills in a supportive environment. Group learning is effective, as can be seen from feedback from the members, their performances, and the children's guardians. Being members of the ensemble transformed these children with little knowledge of music into confident young musicians capable of asserting their confidence and performing a variety of choral-instrumental pieces at school and in their local community. The inclusion of local and classical genres such as Palladio, Dikir Barat, and nursery rhymes developed the children's appreciation of music, discipline, creativity, and teamwork. These findings indicate that ensemble-based musical instruction and literacy are not only sustainable, but this form of education also supports the positive development of social and emotional skills in children, and that more ensembles could be formed. While exploratory, this study has provided some directions for developing much musical knowledge and crucial life skills through music making in a children's ensemble outside school contexts and for further research into studies exploring young children's social and emotional development through music.

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The Figures of (Sound/Noise) in the Thai Art Context

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Abstract

This study explores the evolution of sound art in Thai modern and contemporary art from the 1960s to the present. Early artists visualized sound using traditional elements, while the 1990s saw a shift toward media, video, and performance art, driven by global trends and new art spaces. The 2000s brought international recognition, with artists integrating interactive and conceptual sound elements. By the 2010s, those with music backgrounds introduced sophisticated sound systems and interdisciplinary collaborations. However, challenges persist, including inadequate exhibition spaces, limited funding, and a lack of technical expertise. These constraints slow down innovation and the broader recognition of sound art in Thailand. Addressing these issues through government and private sector support is crucial to fostering a more sustainable ecosystem for artists. Increased awareness and institutional backing will ensure the continued growth of sound art, allowing artists to explore new creative possibilities and expand their audience.

Keywords: *Sound Art in Thailand, Soundscape in Thai Art, Thai Contemporary Art, Thai Art History, New Media in Thai Art*

Introduction

The 1980s marked the emergence of sound art as an integral part of the Thai art scene. Sound in artwork generally falls into two categories: 1) Sound utilised as an element within media art, and 2) Human sound occurring within performing art. In the post-2000 era, the number of artists presenting video art had significantly increased. Many artworks aimed to present their concept through sound, whether produced by humans, music, or experimental sounds. However, sound art remained relatively obscure, primarily due to its niche audience and its frequent classification as mixed media or video art. The popularity of sound art in Thailand has mainly been facilitated by music students and experimental music composers. Furthermore, sound art has yet to establish a significant presence in contemporary art discourse. Many artists produce sound artworks only for certain projects, with neither continuity nor the accumulation of experience in creating sound art. Academics and artists have noted six important factors that make the development of sound art in Thailand more difficult: 1) The requirement of a wide range of knowledge, including art, music, engineering, and other related fields, 2) The budget for creation, 3) The space suitable for the artwork, 4) Accessibility of technology and human resources to assist artists, 5) Funding support from both the public and private sectors, and 6) The difficulty of selling such works to art galleries, museums, and collectors. Raising awareness about this art form, its historical significance, and its innovative potential could lead to increased public appreciation. As more people understand its cultural and artistic value, there is a possibility of greater institutional and financial support for artists working in this field.

Sound in Modern Thai Art

From studies on the history of modern Thai art, it was found that sound was not used in art communication, whether synthetic sound or natural sound. Instead, only visual symbolic representations were used to evoke the auditory imagery, for example Sompot Upa-in's work The Musician; poster and ink on paper, in 1958, and Unknown Title; poster on paper around ca. 1960 (Kumpat, 2014:28-34). Upa-in was a painter who often presented conceptual works that related to subconscious feelings. The Musician was presented experimentally in the Cubist style, as if it was a new artistic approach in Thailand. It is obvious that many artists who have studied abroad or closely follow Western art news have been influenced in seeking to present new and experimental forms of expression. Both works by Upa-in communicated through the musical symbols, as well as musical gestures, and even the composition within the image imitates the composition of music. Comparable to the work of Wassily Kandinsky, who used movement and dynamics in his artistic elements, reflecting an attempt to express the communication of sound through a symbolic system in his paintings. Another example is Kiettisak Chanonnart' s mixed media art in 1968, Painting, depicting the creation of sound in painting in Thai modern art. The image of the screaming man evokes the feeling of pain and the state of being psychologically pressured. He attached objects to the painting, which shares similarities with the assemblage art group artists, Robert Rauschenberg, Raoul Hausmann and Kurt Schwitters. This artwork by Chanonnart is often referenced as an assemblage and surrealism art piece in the early period of modern Thai art. Observation: The theme of the subconscious state appeared to be a trend in the Thai art scene during that period, and was used to communicate artistic concepts. Another example is Thawan Duchanee's Vitruvian Man; 1968 oil on canvas, 203 x 247.5 cm. Duchanee was a painter who often created a sense of sound through his paintings of humans and animals, until it became a significant characteristic of his works. Vitruvian Man featured a man and water buffaloes opening their mouths and making loud noises with all their might. According to a collector who studied said work, the artist

conveyed the message of liberation and emotional release through this painting. "Thawan had recently graduated from Europe and had gained enlightenment in various fields of art and science in the Western world. He portrayed himself through the image of Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, which symbolised the knowledge of accurately determining human proportions according to anatomical principles." (Vachajitpan, 2023). Duchanee discussed the discovery of truth in Thai society in this piece, the water buffaloes and a man on the back of one symbolising the agricultural social system of Thailand as well as rural life. Chang Tang, a self-taught artist with a non-art education background, depicted the sound symbolic system in his paintings through letters and the repetition of short words over and over. Examples of some of the words include; people, democracy, peace, mindfulness, and state religion. Tang was also interested in literature, politics, social change and philosophy. When considering Tang's series of drawings, it is prominent that the artist used handwriting, rough drawing, scribbling, or sometimes a systematic and proportional approach. The letters were like his speech, voicing his feelings toward social changes. The letters and words conveyed concentration, contemplation, and the artist's outbursts. The communication was sophisticated without the need for directness. It even prompted viewers to envision performance art through his rapid drawing. Many of Tang's works share similarities with those of the Mono-ha movement in Japan, despite him never being influenced by such groups.

The above examples show the attempt of modern Thai artists who were striving to experiment with Western art forms, by employing elements of art to develop the identity of modern Thai art, both in content and form, distinct from commercial art. Modern Thai art was described through the writing of Corrado Feroci (known as Silpa Bhirasri) (1959) about variety of expressions that related to nature, environment, landscape, human, way of life, change of lifestyle, westernisation, and universalism. In addition, the modern art style that is popular in Thailand include impressionism, cubism, futurism, expressionism, non-representationalism and surrealism.

Figure 1. Thawan Duchanee, Vitruvian Man (1968); Oil on canvas, 203 x 247.5 cm., Private Collection. Source: https://anurakmag.com/art-and-culture/10/12/2023/vitruvian-man-version-thawan-duchanee/.

The Art of Using Sound and Defying Norms

During the transition of modern Thai art to contemporary art, Chatvichai Promadhattavedi, the director of former Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art, established in 1974, said that Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art was a place for experimenting with various creative works, including modern art, experimental art, performances, music, literature, and poetry. It was an open space for new forms of art to showcase to the Thai public in ways that differed from state-affiliated art institutions. Most of the artworks focused on unconventional formats such as video art, art installation, performance art, and photographs. Young generation artists at that time had studied abroad. Artists like Apinan Poshyananda, Chumpon Apisuk, Vasan Sitthiket, and Kamol Phaosavasdi presented their artworks in a new direction that opposed modern art forms. The stage of experimentation was one of the activities that focused on experimenting with new art forms such as Happening, Music with Performance, reading the novel and so on. Chumpon Apisuk stated that the activities did not just take place in the art hall but also presented art in public spaces, facilitating the exchange of meanings and values of art.

In 1985, Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art held an exhibition showcasing an alternative art aesthetics by Apinan Poshyananda titled *How to Explain Art to a Bangkok Cock*. That exhibition presented new and shocking elements to the viewer, including video performances and public displays of turkeys and chicks. The sound from the video, the artist's live performance, and the loud chirping of the chicks echoed throughout the art hall, along with the sound of the viewers. "Debate about what is art and what is not art. Apinan had left trails of question marks, regarding the Thai art institution system, showing that it was in need of change and restructuring." The work of Poshyananda introduced new directions for art into the Thai art scene, focusing especially on factors that involved the application of sound and ambient noise. In the same year, 1985, Kamol Phaosavasdi presented *Song for the Dead* in the style of Arte Povera. His exhibition featured both installation and performance art. The installation comprised with waste, scrap metal, other materials, and photocopies of Marilyn Monroe (similar to the works of Andy Warhol in 1962). The live performance included sound made with abandoned metal scraps from Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University and the reading aloud of the postmodern art manifesto. The sound occurred during the live performance from the performer's movement, which involved beating the object, setting off the firecrackers, and splashing black paint on the images of Marilyn Monroe. The artist created sounds to evoke the viewer's feelings within the atmosphere determined by the artist. This influenced the interpretation of the artist's work. "It is a declaration of questioning and rejection of both traditional aesthetic norms and Modern Art." (Prompan, 2019) Studying abroad has influenced Poshyananda and Phaosavasdi's artistic creations, leading them to share a similar desire to communicate new forms of artistic ideas to Thai society.

Artworks in Thailand that incorporate sound are mostly found in the form of media art, video installations, and art installations. These works prioritise the selection of sound and noise, as well as site-specific considerations, which support the communication of ideas by contemporary artists. Phaosavasdi, a media artist, is an example of an artist who incorporates sound alongside his visual works, emphasising the image and presenting a new experience for the viewer, first seen in his work *Song for the Dead* in 1985. This was accomplished through the process of recording natural sound, acoustic sound and experimental sound, as seen in *Between Hopeful and Hopeless* in 1998, *Quiet Storm* in 2005 and *Sparrows* in 2011. He

continued to incorporate sound into his artwork, leading up to his work *Sweet Boundary in the Light Tube* in 2018, at 'Bangkok Art Biennale 2018,' the 1st edition.

If we consider the development of the history of Thai art, we will find that external factors have both directly and indirectly affected the development of the perception and creation of art. Chumpon Apisuk, the pioneering performing art artist and the founder of the 'Asiatopia Festival' which started in the mid-1990s. The festival has invited Thai and international artists to perform for the Thai viewer. He was both the festival organiser and an artist himself. Apisuk intended to use sound in most of his performances, whether through vocalising from reading, tapping, moving or interacting with the sound equipment such as a microphone. We can also understand his ideas through the way he incorporated the sound. The transition period from modern Thai art to contemporary art, there was an increase in using real sound to create artworks, in the form of media art, video art, and performing art. The influence of Western art, including the avant-garde art group, conceptual art and postmodern art, came to Thailand's art society. Meanwhile, traditional Thai artists continued to prioritise art competitions and art trading. Thai artists began to question the Thai art industry about the influence of Thai art school and art competitions that largely determined the success of professional artists.

Figure 2. Kamol Phaosavasdi, *Song for the Dead* (1985); Installation and performance at Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art, Collection of Artist. Source: Artist's archives.

Early Contemporary Art and the Sound of Change
Montien Boonma, one of the pioneers of contemporary Thai art, played a crucial role in the development of Thai contemporary art, both on a national and international scale. Many academics consider his innovative use of materials and communication techniques, which

carry a sense of Southeast Asian identity, to be significant. If we thoroughly consider Boonma's works, it is found that his sound environment and ambient sound were his primary tools for conveying the concept of the art work. This can be compared to the use of olfactory experiences, which are widely accepted in the art world. *Lotus Sound*; 1992, terracotta bells, gilded wood was first exhibited at 'The 1st Asia Pacific Triennial.' This piece by Boonma paradoxically evokes sound through silence, using the viewers' recalling of the sound of large bells sizing 300 x 350 x 300 cm. Above this tenuous structure hangs gilded petals of the lotus flower. The artist aimed for the viewer to imagine the blooming process, evoking the sound of lotus blossoms by observing the terracotta bells installed in a curved wall-like formation, along with the blooming lotus petals. Boonma was an expert in using space, from in between, inside out to outside in. His concept was related to the truth of nature, spirituality, peace, emptiness, and enlightenment. The development of the sound sculpture *Rock Bell Garden* in 1994. It was made from bronze and stone in Tachikawa. This outdoor art installation consisted of a stack of brass bells arranged in a circle, surrounded by a circular passageway. The straight approach to and circular movement through the work resembled circumambulatory movement typical of Buddhist stupas. The viewer can use small stones to strike the bells and create sound. Boonma's main concept was self-contemplation, and introspection. The artwork Rock Bell Garden actives in two parts at the same time: imagining the sound from within the mind, and creating sound from interacting with the artwork. In 1995, Boonma developed the application of sound in the artwork, *Salas for the Mind* made with steel graphite accompanied by two separate audios. The work utilises the symbols of question marks and works with the concept of emptiness (being and nothingness). The artist installed small stereos with speakers inside the two pieces of artworks, editing the sounds of chanting, Hong-Kwan (a ritual to call back the spirit), the Pali language, and chantings in a northern dialect together. The artist edited the audio down to just the sounds of breathing and vocalisation, making it impossible to understand the content but allowing the viewer to perceive the feeling of breathing in and out (Nongbua, 2024). This artwork discusses philosophical Buddhist concepts about the view of life, ignorance, questioning what happens around us, uncertainty, and impermanence. The sound in Boonma's contemporary artwork is varied and flexible, with no fixed rules. However, he considers what is best suited for communicating the intended concept, creating a new experience for perceiving contemporary art.

Artist, musician, poet, and political activist, Vasan Sitthiket often creates artwork that criticise society, , economics, religion, and frequently the Thai art industry. As seen in *How To Make A Good Art For Get Win Award,* a 17.13 min video made in 1993, Sitthiket criticised the 'National Art Exhibition' (from National Art Competition) during that time period. This competition had an impact on an individuals ability to become a professional artist and to later transition into the role of an art teacher at an educational institution. The artist recorded a video of himself giving lectures on how to win awards, as well as techniques for combining different artistic elements that the judges preferred to create a new artwork. This video features interesting sound techniques, such as the well-structured tone of voice of the lecture, the sound of tapping on the blackboard, the sound of chalk writing on the board, and the reading of the script at the end of the video. Although this artwork takes the form of video art, the viewer would still be able to understand the content and appreciate the sound aesthetics perfectly even if the visual component was removed. In 1995, the music album Vasan Sitthiket and Ebola Record featured 11 songs about the effect of the

political changes in 1992's *Bloody May/Black May*. Sitthiket criticises politics, failed states, corruption, and encourages the younger generation through the blues and folk music that he loves. His sound has a unique identity, characterised by the vocal, emphasis on heavy sounds, repeating song lyrics, and even some improvisation. Interestingly, the artist described his songwriting as follows: "I've written this set of songs over time for political activism, to be sung alongside my fellow countrymen during protest marches, whether passing by Sanam Luang, the parliament, or Government House, and Chutha Sucharit's Ruang Phueng shop in Chatuchak Park." From this statement, it can be understood that Sitthiket's work has the characteristics of provoking a sense of political participation, creating excitement, and interacting with the viewer.

In addition to these two artists, there are also live performances by artists that fall under the similar use of sound art. Reading for *Three Female Corpses,* a performance by the female artist, Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook, in 1997, is an example of using sound in artwork through reading. This work has made a significant impact on the Thai art scene. The objects that she used in her works for conveying artistic messages challenge the viewer's perceptions, ethical standards, traditional beliefs, and creates a sense of discomfort. The artist slowly read the traditional Thai literature piece, Inao (The Creation of Emotion in Inao of King Rama II) in front of 3 corpses. This piece of literature deals with themes of love, loss, desire and feminism (Fuhrmann, 2015:10-17). She read aloud in front of the corpses in a natural tone, with no sense of panic or worry. Her gentle and soothing voice allows the viewer to imagine the drama. Simultaneously, the viewer watches the video of lifeless bodies, evoking a parallel image between the present world and the afterlife. Those who know Rasdjarmrearnsook personally would recognise her ability to use idioms that require careful consideration from many perspectives, as well as her unique use of voice which has been refined over years of practice. Rasdjarmrearnsook had several other literary reading series, such as Lament in 2000, *Reading for Female Corpse* in 2001, *Thai Medley I, II, and III* in 2002. Around 2005, the artist shifted from passive reading to a simulated interactive format by teaching art and art history to the deceased, seen in her work The Class and the series The Death Seminar. The voice she used for narration, questioning, and repetition was gentle, friendly like a teacher would be when teaching a student. The way humans use their voices is actually a key tool in sound art. As we observe the various tones of voice used in the readings of manifestos by Futurism and Dadaism artists, or the act of speaking out to present ideas, we can discern how each tone present in the works of Sitthiket, Phaosavasdi, and Rasdjarmrearnsook contributes towards distinguishing the meaning of the work and conveying a range of emotions, including harshness, heaviness, depression, loss, hopelessness, and gender.

Figure 3. Montien Boonma, Lotus Sound (1992); Terracotta, gilded wood, 390 x 542 x 117 cm. (irreg.), Collection of Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art. Source: https://collection.qagoma.qld.gov.au/objects/14328.

Active Interactive 2000's

The interpretation of sound in artwork does not only consider the physical aspect; the process of breathing, focusing on the breath; inhaling and exhaling, is also related to the idea of using the human voice in contemporary art. Sutee Kunavichayanont is a contemporary artist known for his interactive artworks, such as *The Myth from the Rice Field (Breath Donation)* in 1998. In his piece *The White Elephant* from 1999, viewers were encouraged to participate by blowing air into human-shaped and elephant-shaped balloons. These balloons would only fully inflate with the help of the viewer's breath. The elephant balloon, symbolising the Thai nation, lays flat on the ground, which would only take on its full shape through the participation of the audiences. Considering this perspective of using sound, the audiences become the performer. The act of blowing air into the balloon, the sound of breathing, and the effort involved become significant parts of the concept behind creating the work. Similarly, the idea of giving, sharing, and donating breath to something is linked to Buddhist philosophy. In addition to using breath to directly impact the artwork,

there is also the exploration of the shapes created by breath, seen in *Into the Wind* in 2015 by Witaya Junma. Junma encourages the viewers to blow their breath into a wind speed measuring device. The artwork resembled a large blower, enabling the wind to blow soap bubbles according to the viewer's blowing. If the viewer blows for a longer duration, the bubbles will be larger. This is similar to when artists want to turn sound into a physical form or a group of sound sculptures. Even though the sound heard in this piece may be just a soft blowing sound or the sound of breathing, the artist reveals the invisible mass of sound, air, vibration, and waves into a shape that the viewer can experiment with by blowing air in various ways.

Pinaree Sanpitak is a female artist who communicates the issues of feminism, mother-hood, the relationship between her and her son. Her *Flying Cubes* in 2011, at The Art Center Chulalongkorn University, was a large sound installation, consisting of origami paper, blown glass pieces, speakers, and motion sensors. It was considered an important artwork and has been experimented with in various aspects, including the materials used, installation of the work, software design for viewer interaction, and educational activities with visually impaired students. Hundreds of flying cubes origami pieces were hung from the ceiling, along with blown glass in the shape of a woman's breast. Sixteen speakers and motion sensors were installed. The sensor detected the movement of viewers as they entered the area. The music selected by the artist was linked to her emotions and relationships, including classical music and modified noise. As a large number of viewers entered the area at the same time, the sound would rise together, forming a new piece of music. This piece was the first time the artist experimented with using sound in her work, providing a new aware-ness in sound art through the synchronisation of sound with the movement of the viewers. Amrit Chusuwan, is another artist who often creates media art that challenges the viewer's perception of sound. Materialised was mentioned in the exhibition catalog 'From the Mes-sage to Media,' as "a piece of video art which used a simple technique of recording sound from an exhibition entrance and replaying it within the exhibition ." Chusuwan often uses sound recordings in a spatial sense to convey the significance of space in site-specific art and to explore people's interactions with space. 'In the Beat Solo Exhibition' at Tadu Thai-yarnyon Contemporary Art in 2014, the visuals and sound used were linked to the concepts of rhythm, life, and consciousness. While the viewers might not directly interact with the works in the exhibition, they still had the opportunity to examine the correlations between visuals and sound. For example, in the work *Drummer*, viewer would notice that the audible rhythm didn't synchronise with the presented visual image. The artist wanted this work to get the viewer to consider consciousness and contemplation in each moment.

Arnont Nongyao is an artist who has created sound art since studying at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Chiang Mai University. Nongyao is interested in using sounds in various forms, such as music experiments, soundscapes, music, chance music, sound sculptures, sound performance art, etc. We can interpret the sound and noise in many of Nongyao's works from data sources, as well as from his creation of new sounds. His knowledge and musi-cal skills enable him to convey meaning, evoke emotion, and facilitate interesting ways to communicate. *Mix Tape as Wall (The musician don't know the band)* in 2013, was Nongyao's work which allowed the viewer to participate in creating sound. Nongyao brought magnetic tape from various sources to create a high relief sculpture attached to the wall. The viewer

was able to use a head tape cassette pen, a device that the artist invented to create sound (referred to Nam June Paik's *Random Access Music» Exposition of Music – Electronic Television*, 1963). The interest in Nongyao's experiment lies in the unique way he creates awareness for the viewer about what sound art is. His work *UnStoberry (this is not stoberry)* in 2016, at The Art Center, Chulalongkorn University, also allowed the viewer to participate. When the sensor detected movement, the CCTV image in the exhibition would vibrate, and the real-time radio broadcast from the National Broadcasting Services of Thailand would be interrupted by the vibration. This caused the sound and the image of the news being broadcasted to constantly shake, making it difficult to understand the content that was shown.. The artist's experimentations with creating distortion in his works parallel the idea of distorting the truth. We can interpret the concept of the hidden agenda in this work by how it mirrors the way governments present facts through state-controlled news. *Chat...Naa (next life)* at 'Bangkok Art Biennale 2018,' was a continuation of creating interaction between the viewer and the work. Nongyao used the vibrations and projecting images of the transitioning hole, which resembled a channel leading to an unknown future. The viewer can interact with the work, in order to interpret the meaning of an uncertain life in the future.

Twilight, created in 2018, at Khao Khanab Nam's small bat cave Tha Pom Khlong Song Nam (Two Water Canal) and Noppharat Thara Beach, at the '1st Thailand Biennale Krabi 2018,' was a sound art piece by Jedsada Tangtrakulwong, another site-specific piece that conveys the notions of meaning, perception, and the experience of sound (the sound installation). The artist recorded sounds from three sources: the sound of bats flying out of their nest in large numbers at twilight to find food, the ambient sounds of nature and living things in the area, and the sounds of long-tailed boats. Each sound was installed in a unique area, and would be triggered when the sensors detected the viewer's movement. When the sounds from different areas came together, they formed a new sound. The piece created a theatre of sounds, which the artist used to reflect on nature, humans, and technology.

Figure 4. Jedsada Tangtrakulwong, Twilight (2019); Sound art and sculpture on a long-tail boat, Collection of Artist. Source: https://jedsadatree.blogspot.com/2019/02/.

Musician Plays Around the Sound Art Installation

Since the 2010s, musicians, composers, and sound engineers have played an increasingly significant role in the art scene and sound art in Thailand. Groups of music students or music graduates are interested in this art form. They have a creative process that differs from contemporary artists (visual artists). Contemporary artists are more interested in meaning, behaviour, or aesthetic processes, while musicians have an understanding of the complexity in using instruments, sound quality, editing, and the scientific significance of sound. The two groups of artists have different thought processes, yet they share a common purpose: to create sound or noise for communication, whether it is art or not. In 2014, the 'Young Curatorial Workshop' by Japan Foundation together with BACC organised training for new curators. The judges of the project, Gridthiya Gaweewong and Jakapan Vilasineekul, were interested in projects that curate sound art works, since Thailand still lacks artists who explore this approach. This indicates that not only is there a lack of artists creating sound art works, but also a lack in curators who study sound art. Kamonpond Wongcharoenchai selected artists, Eyedropper Fill, Tokin Teekanun, Wannarit Pongprayoon, Vuttiphong Mahasamut, Siwanut Boonsripornchai and Nattapol Rojjanarattanangkool under the exhibition name 'Turning Tweets Pulse.' Most of the works presented the concept of the meaning of life and hope from the past, present to the future through musical sounds, synthetic sounds, and natural sounds (Sangwachirapiban, 2015:77).

Maytee Noijinda, a musician from the rock band; Modern Dog, has an interest in creating synthetic sounds, as evidenced by their presence on many of his albums. Noijinda also has interests in creating art, specifically paintings and sculptures since the 2010s. He had not created any sound art because he wanted to study new processes that were different from what he did as a profession. Noijinda often performed synthetic music with Yuree Kensaku and other artists during the opening of art exhibitions. In 2019, *Thru Air On Key Strings,* marked his first solo exhibition, presenting an interpretation of sound art aesthetics. Most of the works focused on creating experimental sounds, using electronic sounds to communicate beyond auditory perception. It consisted of a reinterpretation of John Cage's best known work, 4.33. Noijinda's creative process presented experiments in many forms, such as setting up 25 speakers for each of the 25 notes, making note score music into images before inserting and creating new synthetic sounds, and using AR to help viewers play images and sounds. Another musician who plays a role in experimental music and literature, reflecting society, politics, and culture is Tul Waitoonkiat (Tul, Apartment Khunpa), a professional musician who is interested in art, culture, literature, and DJ. Waitoonkiat often participates in experimental music performances at art events or literature readings, with a variety of tones like the Fluxus group.

Sirasar Boonma, a music composer and one of the founders of the Hear & Found Group (https://hearandfound.com), together with Pansita Sasirawuth, believe that sound can stimulate imagination better than visual. The process of Boonma's work includes the recording of sound in the environment, taking the form of a sound documentary. His work that gained interest received support from the Japan Foundation, *Sound of the Soul* in 2022, explored the lives of 8 ethnic groups in Thailand by recording conversations, sounds in the environment, and music, conveying stories in 5 formats: 1) Local language greeting sounds 2) Audio from an Interview about the rights and the value of cultural diversity 3) Lifestyle sounds 4) Tribal music sounds from all over Thailand 5) Natural sounds. Sirasar's works use local sounds to discuss the lives, culture, and beliefs of ethnic groups whose existence

is often ignored, lacking the rights they should receive from the state. *Sound of the Soul* exhibition, was not only presented through sound, but also through images from documentary films, performances, and lighting in the exhibition enhance the overall experience. This collaboration of various media helped expand the scope of interpreting the value of ethnic groups.

Khetsin Chuchan, a new generation artist who recently graduated in music from abroad, is 1 of 8 artists selected from the 'EARLY YEARS PROJECT #7: A change In the paradigm,' 2022, presenting the work *Dusk Chorus* in 2023, which was a study on the sound of birds in Bangkok. The sounds of birds varied each day. If considered in detail, the sounds of the birds in each evening and night are never the same. The artist aimed to explore the same concept with humans, exploring the identity and behaviour of humans during the same period. He recorded the sounds of other human activities from evening to night, along with the sounds of nature, showing that both humans and nature have different activities during the same period. The work was presented in the form of a sound installation, featuring a designated seating area for the viewer and a simulated evening light. This setup encouraged viewers to imagine a parallel world between nature and humans.

Pakorn Musikaboonlert and Pachara Chirativat are the founders of Viveka + Vehement, both with backgrounds as sound engineers, sound designers and movie soundtrack composers. Musikaboonlert is particularly interested in how sound interacts with humans, experimenting with synthesising new sounds to create new meanings, and creating sounds to understand human life. The latest work of Musikaboonlert in the 'BANGKOK 242 exhibition, Fabric of Time: Bangkok City's Vibration' in 2024 (Music composition + sound manipulation), he studied and arranged the sounds that occur in Bangkok. Each area has its own distinct sound, reflecting the behaviour of its people, forming a cityscape of sound. Musikaboonlert studied the waves, vibrations, and atmosphere captured in the sounds he recorded from each area at different times. He then synthesised these sounds, creating sounds with new meanings related to the urban context. He captured the atmosphere of the area by taking a photograph , experimenting with the B_8 second speed shutter technique to reflect the passage of time. This series of sound installations and photographs represented a space that doesn't need only visual imagery for description. Instead, the incorporation of sound enables humans to evoke more memories and feelings of the space.

Conclusion

In the 1960s: artists in the modern Thai art era, especially painters, used art elements to create waves, vibrations, frequencies, pitches, tones, forms and colours to visualise sound in art. This aimed to stimulate the imagination of symbolic sound. Aside from the aforementioned artists Sompot Upa-in, Kiettisak Channonart and Thawan Duchanee, artists such as Inson Wongsam explored the sound of forest in his sculptures. In addition, Tawee Ratchaneekorn and Angkarn Kallayanapong often created paintings along with poems and literature. Chang Tang, a self-taught artist studied the approach of creating art by himself, presenting the concept of sound through repeatedly writing words text or word, resembling the echo of a sound. The works in the abstract expression group reflected the sound of criticism on society, politics, religion and way of life. The change in aesthetics of Thai art during that period was shaped by artists, academics, collectors and other relevant people who either graduated from abroad or studied trends from overseas. Additionally, there were new forms of art spaces available at that time, such as the Student Christian Center (SCC) Ratchathewi HQ and Silpakorn University.

A transition of contemporary era: artists often presented the use of sound in the form of media art, video art and performance. The pioneer group of mixed media art was Apinan Poshyananda, Chumpon Apisuk, Vasan Sitthiket and Kamol Phaosavasdi who changed the perspective of Thai art, opposing the traditions of Thai art and academic aesthetics, in aspects of form, education, expression and value of art (high/low art in Thai contextualisation). There was also a group of artists who expressed themselves in an experimental way, such as Performance art and Happening art. They chose the way of reading out loud to express themselves on specific issues, such as opposing political change (October 16, 1976 - Black May 1992), educational institutions, and culture. Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art played a significant role in facilitating this change. It was a place to cultivate and give artists an opportunity to show their art experiments, while art spaces under the supervision of the state and educational institutions still supported traditional art and traditional aesthetics. During this period of time, there were many artists, academics and art historians who graduated from abroad. Therefore, there was an expression of Western art, spreading the trend of postmodern art to Thai society. This led to the rapid development of Thai art, which was considered an evolution of Thai art and art history.

Opening the door to the world: the 1990s was a turning point of contemporary Thai art. Thai artists were increasingly invited to exhibit their works internationally, across Asia, Europe, Australia, and America to important festivals and institutions, such as Fukuoka Asia Art Museum, Asia Art Society, Queensland Art Gallery, 'Istanbul Biennial' and so on. Experimenting with new forms of art became very popular from the influence of Montien Boonma, Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook Kamol Phaosavasdi and Vasan Sitthiket, progressive artists who were continuously invited to exhibit their works on the international art stage during that period. Artists adopted a combination of using sound in both physical and symbolic ways to create artwork. It was discovered that conceptual art had an influence on the creation of artwork. After the year 2000, artists who used sound in their works began to create more interaction with the audience (interactive aesthetics). Artists such as Amrit Chusuwan, Pinaree Sanpitak, Sutee Kunavichayanont, Jedsada Tangtrakulwong, Arnont Nongyao and Witaya Junma created synthetic sound, experimental sound and recordings of surrounding sound. They were interested in interpreting the meaning of sound, analysing the visual and sound aspects of Musique concrète (meaning 'concrete music') as well as experimenting with changing the way they communicated their art with the audience. Creating this form of art requires knowledge, skills and techniques from experts. Many artists began to work with experts in other fields, which led to the shift away from artist self-centredness.

In 2010s: artists with backgrounds in music conservatories began to use contemporary art to communicate their works of experimental music, synthetic sound and live performance. These artists could access quality tools and equipment. They had more knowledge and understanding of music theory and other resources than artists who studied art. Visual artists or art graduates prioritised the significance of meaning, the process of creating sound and aesthetics over aspects of sound quality, techniques and complexity of sound system. However, artists in the field of professional music often worked with experts in multidisciplinary fields. Maytee Noijinda, Sirasar Boonma, Pakorn Musikaboonlert, Khetsin Chuchan, Kamonpond Wongcharoenchai, Tul Waitoonkiat are examples of a group of artists who played an important role in the future of sound art. They created works that were different from artists who studied art.

From data collection interviews with sound art artists and related personnel, it's evident that Thailand still lacks support in three areas: 1) Suitable spaces for presenting Sound Art, whether it's the size of the venue or the readiness of equipment. 2) Funding to support research and experimentation. 3) Human resources, specifically experts who collaborate with artists. These factors need to be addressed in order to further develop sound art in Thailand. Without proactive measures to support sound artists, Thailand risks stalling the progression of this unique artistic discipline. To move forward, collaboration between government agencies, private institutions, and independent artists is essential in establishing dedicated sound art spaces, funding initiatives, and skill development programs. These steps will not only sustain the existing sound art community but also inspire the next generation of artists to explore and innovate in this field.

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Revolutionizing Dance: Advanced Choreographic Trends of the 21st Century

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Abstract

The study, "Revolutionizing Dance: Advanced Choreographic Trends of the 21st Century," provides an in-depth examination of the contemporary dance landscape. This paper underscores the significance of emerging dance paradigms in the 21st century, artfully blending time-honoured traditions with cutting-edge innovations, promoting artistic ingenuity, stringent discipline, and synergistic collaborations. Central principles highlighted include interdisciplinary partnerships and a heightened awareness of environmental issues, both of which contribute substantially to the broader dance discourse. Additionally, the work accentuates the essentiality of copyright awareness and the diligent deterrence of dance plagiarism, pivotal in safeguarding choreographers' rights and advocating for an ethos underscored by respect and ethical integrity. This scholarly contribution delivers valuable perspectives for professionals, educators, and enthusiasts, deepening comprehension of the dynamic shifts characterizing 21st century dance.

Keywords: *Contemporary Choreography, 21st Century Dance Paradigms, Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Dance Innovations, Choreographic Evolution, Revolutionizing Dance*

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Introduction

In the scholarly examination of dance's evolutionary trajectory, the 21st century stands prominently as a transformative epoch, distinguished by the emergence and entrenchment of cutting-edge choreographic paradigms. These novel paradigms have not only revolutionized dance's epistemological and artistic foundations but have also etched an irreplaceable niche within the overarching narrative of contemporary cultural studies (Dagenhardt and Duigan, 2010).

At the nexus of this scholarly discourse is the seamless assimilation of technological breakthroughs into choreographic processes. The inauguration of motion-capture techniques and immersive digital platforms has endowed choreographers with a sophisticated arsenal of tools. These advancements herald dance renditions that masterfully amalgamate the palpable corporeality of the human physique with the ephemeral realm of digital architecture (Kowal, Siegmund, and Martin, 2019). Such a harmonious interplay empowers dancers to traverse a multifaceted performative domain, interwoven with virtual manifestations, while contemporaneous kinematic scrutiny fosters a nuanced fusion of tangible and digital domains, reframing erstwhile ontological dichotomies.

Augmenting the scholarly discourse is a heightened emphasis on interdisciplinary synergies. Contemporary choreographic inclinations reveal a pronounced predilection among exponents to cultivate symbiotic alliances with luminaries spanning diverse artistic fields, encompassing visual mediums, sonic orchestrations, and the meticulous exactitude of scientific inquiries (Steele, 2009). These composite collaborations yield performances that challenge and redefine the conventional lexicon of dance, instigating a re-evaluation of its time-honoured contours and stimulating an augmentation of its aesthetic ambit.

Furthermore, an intrinsic hallmark of 21st-century choreographic endeavours is a re-envisioned commitment to inclusivity and pluralism. Driven by prevailing sociocultural mandates, choreographers are zealously invested in crafting inventive portrayals that encapsulate a myriad of cultural tales, morphological diversities, and kinetic potentialities within the theatrical tableau (Parson, 2022). This epistemological realignment mirrors the broader societal valorization of inclusivity, positioning dance as an art form that reflects and extols the kaleidoscope of modern human experiences.

In summation, the choreographic metamorphoses of the 21st century epitomize a landmark paradigmatic transition in dance academia, imbuing it with a layered vibrancy that echoes in the expansive cultural milieu. The amalgamation of technological virtuosity, the scholarly thrust towards interdisciplinary amalgamations, coupled with an invigorated allegiance to inclusiveness, jointly chart the course of dance, reaffirming its profound resonance and academic pertinence in the global artistic panorama.

The Role of 21st-Century Dance Trends for The Next Generation

In the intricate study of "Revolutionizing Dance: Advanced Choreographic Trends of the 21st Century," the implications for the emerging generation are profound, grounded in an array of compelling rationales. Dance, envisioned as an exalted and pervasive medium of artistic expression, surpasses mere geographical confines, situating itself at the intersection of cultural articulations (Bruce, 2018). As an embodiment of narratives, emotional

states, and intellectual constructs, dance materializes as a paramount canvas that mirrors and elucidates the diverse aspects of the human experience. As contemporary practitioners delve into the nuanced modulations of the avant-garde choreographic movements characteristic of the 21st century, they discern a deeper understanding of dance's historical and evolving trajectory (Butterworth and Wildschut, 2017).

Beyond its aesthetic implications, dance is reimagined as a potent conduit for socio-cultural evolution and introspective inquiry (Butterworth, 2019). Within the modern context, numerous choreographers astutely exploit dance's potential to examine and highlight pressing socio-cultural concerns, champion inclusivity, and challenge entrenched norms. Recognizing and engaging with these dynamic movements can inspire the upcoming generation, equipping them to leverage dance as both a vehicle for socio-political expression and a platform for fostering cross-cultural dialogues (Pakes, 2020).

In an era marked by rapid technological advancements and the interwoven narratives of global cultures, dance emerges as a fulcrum adept at balancing tradition with modernity (Hayes, 2013). Mastery in deciphering the subtleties of these pioneering choreographic trends, often distinguished by the integration of cutting-edge technological tools and cross-disciplinary collaborations, grants the new generation the discernment and insight necessary to navigate the multifaceted landscapes of today's cultural milieu (Payne, 2019).

Additionally, dance serves as a crucible for nurturing creativity, analytical rigor, and collaborative synergy—skills invaluable not just within the hallowed halls of a dance studio, but extending across daily life and professional pursuits (Wengrower and Chaiklin, 2020). Immersion in advanced choreographic techniques refines these capabilities, equipping the new generation with a holistic framework for both personal and professional growth.

For the next generation of dancers and choreographers, gaining a deep understanding of "Revolutionizing Dance: Advanced Choreographic Trends of the 21st Century" is crucial. This foundational knowledge, underpinned by a spectrum of compelling discourses spanning the philosophical to the practical, is essential for the conscientious guardianship and future evolution of this revered art form. The core themes of this subject can be distilled into five principal components:

1. Cultural Preservation and Evolution
Dance, in academic circles, serves as a prism reflecting cultural context and societal dynamics. It plays a dual role: conserving historical legacy and driving its ongoing evolution. Flatt (2019) asserts that dance transcends geopolitical boundaries, emerging as a crucial vehicle for cultural communication. A comprehensive grasp of advanced choreographic techniques allows the emerging generation to resonate with their artistic predecessors while integrating cutting-edge approaches.

2. Catalyst for Societal Transformation
Roche and Burridge (2022) have highlighted dance's innate potential to instigate societal change and enable introspection. Numerous choreographers, harnessing this potential with insightful precision, utilize dance to address pressing sociocultural issues, champion inclusivity, and challenge deep-seated societal norms. Familiarity with these dynamic cho-

reographic shifts can inspire the next generation to employ dance as a potent instrument for societal introspection and as a platform for enriching cultural dialogues.

3. *Navigating a Complex World*
In our current era, characterized by rapid technological advancement and the intermingling of global cultures, dance serves as a crucial intermediary, bridging the divide between tradition and contemporaneity (Brannigan, 2011). Proficiency in modern choreographic nuances, which often involve the fusion of innovative technologies and interdisciplinary collaborations, equips the emerging generation with the critical acumen needed to navigate the diverse layers of the modern cultural fabric.

4. *Personal and Professional Development*
Beyond its aesthetic realm, dance is pivotal in developing core competencies—creativity, discipline, and collaborative synergy—that resonate across various life domains and professional pursuits (Winship, 2015). A didactic engagement with dance, enriched by a deep dive into its progressive dimensions, promotes comprehensive personal and professional growth.

5. *Artistic Continuation and Innovation*
The responsibility lies with the upcoming generation to uphold and enrich dance's esteemed legacy. To effectively fulfill this role, they must possess an in-depth understanding of current choreographic trends, as these trends will shape the future trajectory of dance (Bruce, 2018).

In conclusion, the study of advanced choreographic frameworks is not merely an academic endeavor; it stands as both a theoretical aspiration and a practical necessity. Such profound understanding empowers the next generation to preserve cultural heritage, drive societal transformation, adeptly navigate an intricate global landscape, bolster personal and professional paths, and make innovative contributions to the ongoing evolution of dance. As such, this deep-seated knowledge is crucial for ensuring that dance continues to thrive as a poignant and transformative artistic medium.

Essential Concepts of 21st-Century Choreographic Trends
Within the intricate tapestry of contemporary dance, the 21st century heralds notable transitions in choreographic techniques. An intensive exploration titled "Essential Concepts of 21st-Century Choreographic Trends" unfolds as a scholarly endeavor, probing the foundational pillars upholding this dynamic discipline. These tenets collectively sculpt the intricate landscape of modern choreography, offering guidance to practitioners, curators, and astute observers, elucidating a vast expanse of artistic brilliance and pioneering advancements.

Contemporary dance, in its present-day guise, transcends traditional boundaries, embracing an eclectic mix of influences. These span from avant-garde technological innovations to assimilation of diverse cultural narratives, from heightened environmental consciousness to sharp societal commentaries. This transformative phase has birthed an array of pivotal concepts that not only define but consistently refine our modern-day understanding of dance. As we undertake a methodical scholarly inquiry into the foundational concepts emblematic of 21st-century choreographic inclinations, we will delineate aspects such as

cross-disciplinary collaborations, deft integration of cutting-edge technology, convergence of variegated cultural frameworks, steadfast commitment to representation, discerning explorations of socio-political motifs, elevated eco-awareness, transcendent immersive experiences, and the powerful storytelling inherent in movement.

Each concept, subjected to rigorous examination, epitomizes the multifaceted and responsive nature of contemporary dance, highlighting its adeptness to both reflect and engage with the diverse exigencies of our contemporary context. Through detailed analysis, we gain deep insights into the astute methodologies adopted by choreographers to craft performances that resonate both viscerally and cerebrally, forging deep resonances with a worldwide audience. We cordially invite you to accompany us on this scholarly journey, delving into the pivotal principles that contour the domain of 21st-century dance—a realm where ingenuity persistently confronts tradition and where the founts of creativity are ever-flowing. Central to this discourse are eight distinct thematic arenas:

1. Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Contemporary Dance
Contemporary dance, in the prevailing context, witnesses a pronounced upswing in inter-disciplinary collaborations. This trend is evident through the endeavors of choreographers, who are zealously establishing partnerships with professionals spanning a diverse array of fields, including visual arts, music, theatre, and technology (Butterworth and Sanders, 2020). Such collaborations yield performances that eclipse traditional dance confines, melding multifarious artistic components into a harmonious whole. For instance, when choreographers ally with visual art specialists, the ensuing partnership often crafts set designs that are not only visually captivating but also conceptually profound, seamlessly integrating into the overall dance narrative.

2. Technological Augmentation in Choreography
Modern choreographic practices have been profoundly transformed by the integration of cutting-edge technologies (Lepecki, 2012). Choreographers today deftly employ tools like motion-capture technology, allowing for a meticulous recording and detailed analysis of bodily movements. These technological strides empower choreographers to design sequences noted for their complexity and exactitude. Furthermore, the emergence of interactive digital environments offers dancers the opportunity to engage with virtual elements, blurring the lines between the physical and the digital realms. Such integration not only broadens the scope of artistic expression but also introduces novel avenues for audience immersion and interactive experiences during dance performances.

3. The Paradigm of Cultural Fusion in Choreography
In the choreographic landscape, 'cultural fusion' refers to the amalgamation of diverse dance traditions, creating a unique movement vocabulary (Macaulay and Bourne, 2011). By tapping into a wealth of cultural sources, choreographers are proficiently blending motions, rhythms, and narrative elements from various traditions. These artistic meldings stand as a reflection of the rich multicultural fabric inherent in today's globalized societies, infusing the dance repertoire with fresh dynamism and originality.

4. Championing Inclusivity and Diversity in Choreography
A defining feature of twenty-first-century choreography is its unwavering commitment to inclusivity and diversity (Egert, 2021). This commitment is evident in concerted efforts

to showcase a wide spectrum of cultural backgrounds, physical shapes, and movement capabilities on stage. Fundamentally, such endeavors challenge and deconstruct deep-seated stereotypes within the dance community, aiming to position dance as a medium that resonates with the diverse makeup of its audience. This accentuation on inclusivity not only engenders a profound sense of community belonging but also spurs cultural dialogue within the multifaceted global dance milieu.

5. *Dance as Socio-political Reflection*
At the heart of socio-political discourse, dance emerges as a potent medium for articulating and interrogating pressing concerns of our time (Kowal, Siegmund, and Martin, 2019). Astute choreographers employ the language of physical movement to distill a spectrum of societal themes, encompassing gender dynamics, racial equity nuances, and the urgency of environmental conservation. Thus, dance performances transform into a potent forum, prompting introspective reflection and engendering critical dialogues among audiences, fostering a profound engagement with these salient issues.

6. *Choreography with an Ecological Consciousness*
Within the domain of modern choreographic expression, there exists a cadre of innovators articulating environmental narratives with acute discernment (Butterworth, 2009). Through dance, they vividly convey the implications of human-induced climatic fluctuations and emerge as poignant calls for environmental responsibility. Choreographers navigate the intricate relationships between humanity and the environment, urging viewers to contemplate these impactful ecological tales.

7. *Immersion and Choreography: A Novel Confluence*
Innovative choreographic ventures are increasingly introducing environments that transcend traditional performance boundaries (Payne, 2019). These groundbreaking productions dissolve the customary distinction between performer and observer, immersing the latter in spaces enriched by technological integration. Such immersive platforms necessitate an unprecedented level of participation, shifting the viewer from a passive role to an active, sensory immersion in the choreographic narrative.

8. *Expanding Narrative Horizons through Dance*
With the progression of the 21st century, choreographers display an unwavering dedication to adventurous narrative craft, employing physical expressivity as both a conduit and lexicon for emotional and thematic conveyance (Roche, 2022). These dance-driven narratives, intricately structured, communicate sentiments and concepts primarily through movement. This nuanced form of storytelling invites audiences to discern the layered emotional and thematic nuances within the choreography, enriching their understanding of the expansive narrative capabilities inherent to the medium.

In conclusion, these emergent paradigms collectively illuminate the dynamic and ever-evolving character of contemporary choreography, highlighting its capacity to reflect and respond to the multifaceted shifts within the cultural, technological, and socio-political landscapes of the 21st-century milieu.

Highlighting The Importance of Copyright and Dance Plagiarism Awareness
In the esteemed domain of dance studies, where the synthesis of movement and expression achieves artistic transcendence, the preservation of intellectual and creative endeavors emerges as a paramount consideration. The scholarly inquiry, denominated as "Highlighting the Importance of Copyright and Dance Plagiarism Awareness," seeks to underscore the quintessential role of ethical stewardship within the choreographic community. Beyond the conspicuous grace, aesthetic nuances, and emotional profundity inherent in dance, lies a sophisticated interplay of legal and ethical considerations meriting intensive academic examination.

In our current era, characterized by an unprecedented magnitude of global interconnectivity and rapid dissemination of artistic oeuvres, the imperativeness of bolstering choreographers' rights and fiscal protections is accentuated. Dance, esteemed as a quintessential artistic manifestation, is grounded in tenets of originality, genuineness, and the poignant interpretation of both cultural and individual narratives. However, the delineation between admiration-driven homage and overt appropriation remains elusive, precipitating intricate challenges pertaining to plagiarism and copyright transgressions.

This scholarly disquisition delves into the pragmatic structures pivotal for upholding artistic integrity and fostering an environment steeped in mutual reverence and recognition. It emphasizes the salience of strengthening intellectual property safeguards, ardently advocating for creative originality, and unequivocally extolling the seminal contributions of choreographers. Such contemplations, transcending mere juridical perspectives, act as indefatigable guardians of artistic brilliance and ethical mores, thus perpetuating the continual refinement and prominence of dance as a preeminent art form.

Navigating the intricate labyrinths of copyright and dance plagiarism awareness, we acquire a sophisticated comprehension of the deeply entrenched ethical imperatives zealously guarding dance's diverse panorama. We hereby extend a cordial invitation to embark upon this academic odyssey, through which the unwavering importance of steadfast compliance to these venerable principles, devoted protection of dance's core essence, and the fostering of an ambiance wherein artistic fervor coexists harmoniously with inviolable ethical standards will be expounded upon. This treatise orbits around six pivotal facets:

1. Artistic Integrity in Dance and Its Preservation
Within the domain of dance, the urgency of preserving artistic integrity is intimately bound to the framework of copyright regulations. It is essential to highlight the extensive temporal and creative dedication that choreographers invest in crafting their distinctive choreographic pieces. The umbrella of copyright not only serves as a preventive measure but also as a pivotal shield against the potential erosion or unauthorized appropriation of a choreographer's artistic intent (Kraut, 2015). This safeguarding is particularly salient when reflecting on the core principles of originality and innovation that underpin the dance community.

2. Financial Sustainability: Implications and Significance
The dialogue on financial sustainability emerges as a paramount concern for both solo choreographers and established dance institutions. Copyright's mandate empowers chore-

ographers, bestowing them the discretion to manage both the distribution and monetization of their choreographic works. Through avenues like licensing agreements, live performances, and commercial ventures, choreographers can derive financial support from their artistic endeavors, ensuring their economic resilience and propelling further creative explorations (Koner, 2013). A weakened or absent copyright infrastructure might pose economic hurdles, diminishing the incentive for choreographers to conceive and actualize pioneering dance works.

3. Galvanizing Innovation through Copyright
The structure of copyright law serves as a driving force, catalyzing innovation within the realm of dance. The assurance that choreographic expressions are safeguarded legally emboldens choreographers, spurring them toward bold artistic ventures and broadening their creative spectrum. Free from concerns of premature imitation or unsanctioned replication, choreographers are inspired to explore and establish new movement languages, thematic concepts, and creative terrains (Brandstetter, 2015). This continued push towards innovation reinvigorates the dance repertoire, shaping the developmental trajectory of this revered art form.

4. Choreographic Works: Recognition and Attribution
In the nuanced sphere of intellectual property, copyright is essential for ensuring choreographers receive appropriate recognition for their contributions. As dance pieces are presented or adapted across diverse platforms, acknowledging the originating choreographer becomes an integral part of the artistic narrative. This recognition, beyond honoring the choreographer's foundational input, also serves an educational function, informing audiences about the origins and distinct significance of the choreographic piece (Flatt, 2019).

5. Cultivating a Respectful Dance Culture
Within dance's multifaceted ecosystem, concerns about dance plagiarism have intensified awareness around an ethos of mutual respect. Stakeholders in the dance industry, whether dancers, choreographers, or institutional entities, must epitomize ethical integrity, showing proper reverence to the intellectual property boundaries set by colleagues (Kraut, 2015). This cultivated environment promotes constructive collaborations and fosters healthy competition and camaraderie.

6. Protecting Dance's Diverse Heritage
In the imperative task of preserving dance's storied heritage, especially regarding traditional and culturally significant dances, copyright's role is pivotal. It acts as a protective barrier, shielding these invaluable dance traditions from potential misuse or harmful reinterpretation. Meticulously preserving these dance styles is essential, preserving their unadulterated authenticity and deep cultural resonance (Payne, 2019).

In conclusion, the diverse facets of copyright, coupled with the challenges presented by dance plagiarism, shape a complex nexus encompassing legal, financial, creative, and cultural aspects. These critical elements are fundamental in bolstering choreographers' rights and career paths, stimulating innovative pursuits, preserving artistic integrity, and nurturing a thriving dance community grounded in mutual respect and informed recognition.

Conclusion

In our rigorous examination of "Revolutionizing Dance: Advanced Choreographic Trends of the 21st Century," we identify the profound implications of these avant-garde tendencies on the dance discipline. This comprehensive epilogue explores their pivotal role in shaping the future trajectory of dance, elucidating the foundational principles underpinning contemporary choreographic techniques and emphasizing the critical importance of copyright awareness and addressing issues related to dance plagiarism.

The modern milieu of dance creation and choreography is distinguished by its nuanced and complex nature, eschewing any rigid, universally applicable template for attainment. Fundamentally, this inventive endeavor is deeply influenced by the choreographer's disposition, worldview, and distinct artistic vision. It is imperative to acknowledge that even within the oeuvre of a singular choreographer, their methodological approach may evolve, leading to specialized techniques adapted to the particularities of individual dance projects.

An illustrative exemplar of such dynamic evolution can be found in the choreographic ventures of Naraphong Charassri, a distinguished contemporary artist hailing from Thailand. His remarkable work in conceptualizing and orchestrating the production "Narai Avatara" serves as a salient attestation to the inherent adaptability and advancement characteristic of modern dance choreography. The contributions of Charassri to this artistic domain command notable attention in academic circles.

"Narai Avatara" was envisioned to underscore the timeless relevance of traditional art forms, specifically an emblematic representation of early urban theater, tailored to resonate with contemporary urban viewers. Realizing this vision required a judicious integration of varied elements with the bedrock tenets of traditional art, thereby accentuating its enduring pertinence and inherent allure. The primary aim of this initiative was to elevate the stature of traditional art, cultivating a deeper appreciation within the urban populace for Thailand's rich and culturally resonant artistic legacy. This pioneering endeavor offers a wealth of insights for those with aligned academic pursuits and aspirations (Charassri, 2023).

In the current academic milieu, it is essential to segment our findings into three salient sections:

Nurturing the Next Generation through 21st-Century Dance Paradigms
The ramifications of these contemporary trends go beyond their immediate influence on artistic progression. They serve as foundational guideposts, setting the course for emerging dancers and choreographers. As nascent talents navigate the intricate landscape of the dance sector, these trends integrate both tradition and innovation. They offer a platform to both honour dance's storied heritage and champion groundbreaking artistic frontiers. Furthermore, the competences cultivated through these paradigms — which include creativity, discipline, and collaboration — extend beyond the dance studio, equipping the upcoming generation with a diverse toolkit. Such augmentation ensures the continued recognition of dance as an ever-evolving and transformative art form, preserving its venerated status.

Fundamental Frameworks Underpinning 21st-Century Choreographic Movements
Our systematic exploration of the core tenets anchoring these trends reveals the complex fabric of modern dance. Embedded within these movements are interdisciplinary collaborations, integration of technological innovations, fusion of various cultures, inclusiveness, pertinent socio-political commentaries, environmental awareness, immersive experiences, and storytelling through movement. Each element contributes uniquely to the tapestry of dance, demonstrating the discipline's resilience and adaptability amidst the nuanced challenges of the 21st century. These guiding axioms infuse dance with depth and vitality, spurring cutting-edge methodologies and reinforcing dance's position as a continuously evolving art form.

Championing Copyright Awareness and Addressing Dance Plagiarism
In the realm of artistic expression, the essence of ethical practice, especially concerning copyright literacy and combatting dance plagiarism, cannot be overstated. These concerns are not mere abstract concepts but crucial pillars safeguarding choreographers' rights and legacies. They emphasize the importance of artistic integrity, fostering a culture steeped in respect and ethical standards within the dance community. By resolutely defending intellectual property rights, promoting fresh viewpoints, and celebrating the unique contributions of choreographers, we create an atmosphere conducive to the sustained growth and longevity of dance.

In conclusion, "Revolutionizing Dance: Advanced Choreographic Trends of the 21st Century" should not be perceived merely as a snapshot of dance's contemporary spirit. Rather, it serves as a dynamic compass guiding us through the ongoing evolution of this esteemed discipline. The lasting impact of these trends, in shaping the future trajectory of dance, the elemental principles informing contemporary choreography, and the steadfast dedication to ethical standards, all contribute to ensuring dance's continued role as a transformative force in our cultural milieu. This compelling culmination highlights dance's enduring legacy, its capacity for adaptation, and its consistent relevance within the artistic arena, inspiring forthcoming generations.

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A Digital Creative Industry, Webtoons:
With a Focus on the Thai Webtoon Market

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the current state and challenges of the webtoon industry as a unique creative industry, focusing on the case of Thailand. First, it examines the characteristics and trends of the Webtoon market in Thailand, and how it contributes to the cultivation of a new creative industry. The study's findings show that there is a dynamic relationship between the entry of major Korean webtoon platforms and the Thai publishing companies aided by an influx of Chinese capital that entered the market and established themselves as latecomers. In addition, the Thai-drama adaptations of Korean webtoons in Thailand have led to the transmedia adaptation of webtoons in the Thai market, thereby highlighting the potential of Thailand-based transnationalization of webtoons. This study illuminates how Thai webtoons function as a symbol of transnational cultural movement and elucidates their contribution to the creation of a new creative industry.

Keywords: *Digital Creative Industry, Glocalization, Digital Platform, Webtoon, Thailand, Soft Power*

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Introduction

Webtoons are digital comics that emerged in South Korea in the early 2000s. Webtoon is a combination of the words "web" (for internet) and "cartoon" and refers to comics primarily designed for consumption in the digital phone environment (Han, 2015; Kang, 2018). All digital content in the form of cartoons are called digital comics, of which webtoons are a subset. While defining webtoons precisely is challenging, the amendment of the Promotion of Cartoons Act passed by the South Korean National Assembly on February 27, 2023, provided a legal definition for webtoons (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2023). According to this amendment, cartoons are "a work depicting the world of imagination in one, or two or more compartmentalized frames with pictures and text," digital cartoons are "cartoons on paper or any other tangible medium processed and compiled in the form of a digital file," and webtoons are "cartoons produced on information and communication networks for distribution through information and communication networks." Additionally, for countries wherein cartoons are primarily consumed and produced, "manga" refers to Japanese comics, "comics" to American comics, while "webtoon" specifically refers to Korean comic content. Regarding format, webtoons have a screen-scrolling format where scenes transition through the act of scrolling, unlike traditional comic books where pages have to be physically turned. In other words, webtoons are digital comics produced in Korea, or even internationally created in the Korean style, where the work is read through screen-scrolling.

Webtoons, based on platformization and casual consumption, can proliferate in a transmedia and transnational manner (Jin, 2023). First, webtoons, especially in Korea, are predominantly supplied by major internet service providers, such as Naver and Daum. These providers' platforms are significant beyond merely being a medium between creators and users. They have a social role in creating a new ecosystem in the cultural market (van Dijck, 2013), and leverage digital technology to create spaces for webtoons, encompassing technological, socio-cultural, and business perspectives (Jin, 2015). Second, webtoons are being proliferated based on transmedia storytelling, which reproduces webtoons into various media formats. Transmedia storytelling is a media experience where a fictional work is developed and provided through multiple channels (Jenkins, 2006). Media development serves as the foundation that makes webtoons a source of creativity and backbone for diverse genres, creating recursive consumption through other media. Third, webtoons are transnational media, which is media consumption in Korea and other regions worldwide, in conjunction with Hallyu, which is the global popularity of other media forms of Korean content, such as Korean popular music (K-pop). The Korean webtoon platforms mentioned above have been offering services in foreign languages, including English, since the early 2010s (Jang and Song, 2017), and as of 2024, webtoons are translated and provided in various languages, including English, Chinese, Indonesian, and Thai, spreading webtoon culture and providing a new business model in the creative industry, where host countries produce webtoons domestically and distribute them both domestically and internationally.

This study aimed to explore the current state and challenges of the overseas webtoon industry as a unique creative industry (compared to Korea) against the abovementioned backdrop, concentrating on the case of Thailand. In quantitative terms, Thailand accounts for approximately 8% of Korean webtoon consumption (Korea Creative Content Agency, 2020), which is not a significant market. However, this study focuses on Thailand because of its anticipated sustained growth in digital content (Kishimoto, 2017), including webtoons (Yang, 2021), the robust presence of transmedia features (such as the Thai-drama adap-

tations of Korean webtoons), and the established support system from the public sector, including government support for the digital creative industries, for movement within the Thai industry (Skyllstad, 2011). This study also examines how the aforementioned plat-formization of webtoons, transmedia, and transnational consumption are manifested in Thailand, and how it contributes to the cultivation of a unique creative industry. Precisely, this study aims to summarize the characteristics and trends of the Thai webtoon market. Subsequently, it will examine how webtoon platforms in Thailand are modelling a unique digital content ecosystem and how the combination of webtoon platforms and demand in Thailand leads to the transmedia adaptation of webtoons in Thailand, investigating the po-tential of Thai webtoon transnationalization. This study highlights how webtoons, a genre that has been relatively overlooked, are produced and consumed and its development across various media to emphasize its position as an emerging creative industry. This study is the first to examine the Thai webtoon market, focusing on the global trends of platformi-zation, transmedia, and transnational consumption.

Characteristics of the Thai Webtoon Market
General Characteristics

The Korea Creative Content Agency (2022) estimates the size of the global webtoon indus-try as approximately 1.566 trillion won, with approximately 9,326 webtoon artists as of 2021. Analyzing the export of webtoons from South Korea to different countries, Japan and North America were the destinations with the highest numbers, accounting for 40.1% and 22.3%, respectively. Thailand accounts for 6.3%, which is a slight decrease from the previ-ous year; however, it ranks fifth globally and is the top destination in Southeast Asia. The entire comic market in Thailand, including print comics, digital comics, and webtoons, stood at 45 million dollars in 2019 (Figure 1), with minor fluctuations yearly (Korea Creative Content Agency, 2020). However, the proportion of digital comics (Figure 2), including webt-oons, grew from 4.7% in 2015 to 9.5% in 2019, and may reach 16.5% by 2024 (ibid.). Owing to the decline in the print comics market, the overall market size is predicted to decrease to 41 million dollars in 2024.

Figure 1. Size and growth rate of Thailand's comic market (2015–2025) (Units: in millions dollars, %).
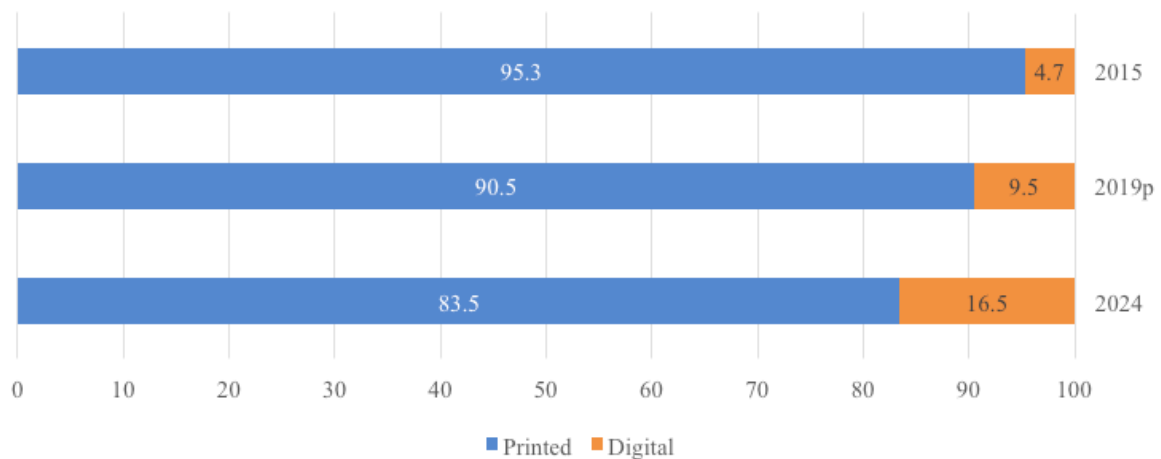
Figure 2. Comparison of market share of different sectors of Thailand's comic market (2015 vs. 2019p vs. 2024 by percentage.

Thailand's webtoon market observed the entry of Naver Webtoon, Korea's largest webtoon platform, in 2014, under the name "Line Webtoon." As of March 2022, it has successfully established itself in the Thai market, boasting over 3.5 million monthly active users and recording a maximum of 172 million monthly views. Later, Kakao Webtoon, a competitor of Naver Webtoon in Korea, also entered the Thai webtoon market. The Kakao Webtoon app, launched in June 2021, remarked significant success by generating 370 million Thai Baht revenue within merely four days of its release. It secured the highest spot in the daily download rankings on the Thai application store and Google Play Store in August, making it the highest-grossing webtoon app in Thailand.

Significant Thai Webtoon Industry Operators

Four Korean webtoon operators and three Thai webtoon operators are considered most prominent in the Thai webtoon industry (KOFICE, 2023). Each operator exhibits differences in the nationality, genre, and characteristics of the webtoons offered, such as providing content aside from webtoons (Figure 3). Understanding these operators' characteristics is vital to comprehend the characteristics and strategies of webtoon services in Thailand. First, Line Webtoon is the largest webtoon operator in Thailand. Line is the name of the messenger application by Naver and is the global service brand for Korea's Naver Webtoon. As mentioned earlier, Line Webtoon entered Thailand in 2014 as the first webtoon company and actively sought local Thai talents, gaining high recognition and becoming a significant influencer (Bangkok Post, 2022). Line Webtoon's genres include romance, romance fantasy, drama, action, fantasy, queer, comedy, thriller, horror, and Thai works. It also offers web novels, albeit not mainstream. A representative Thai webtoon is "Loveless Heroine (วันทองไร้ใจ)," based on a classic Thai folklore, which gained significant attention from its early serialization. As of May 2023, it surpassed 50 million views, securing second rank in the romance fantasy category. Additionally, "Teen Mom (คุณแม่วัยใส)" is about a 17-year-old female protagonist's unexpected pregnancy, childbirth, and related experiences. It garnered significant attention because it addressed societal issues related to teenage sexual experiences and Thailand's childbirth rates. In transmedia development, it was adapted into an eight-episode Television series in 2017.

Company name	Nationality	Details	Operation system	Website
Line Webtoon	Korea	-Korea's Naver Webtoon -Many popular webtoons in each sector and many Thai webtoons by local authors -Few, but provides web novels	Web browser, iOS, Android	https://www.webtoons.com/th
KaKao Webtoon	Korea	- Features a few works by local authors	Web browser, iOS, Android	https://th.kakaowebtoon.com
Comico	Korea	-Provides Korean and Thai webtoons, as well as webtoons imported from China and Japan -Also offers web novels and sells e-books	Web browser, iOS, Android	https://www.comico.in.th
WeComics	Thai	-Former Ookbee Comics -Provides Korean and Thai webtoons, as well as imported webtoons from China	Web browser, iOS, Android	https://www.wecomics.in.th
Sanook Comics	Thai	-The webtoon page of Sanook, Thailand's largest portal site -Provides works by local Thai authors	Web browser	https://comics.sanook.com
Read Awrite	Thai	-Thai e-book company Meb's venture -Provides works by local Thai authors -Provides webtoons as well as web novels and derivative work such as fan fiction	Web browser, iOS, Android	https://www.readawrite.com/
Joylada	Thai	-A social app in a chat-message format, ventured by Ookbee, a Thai e-book company -The main content is novels in the form of a chat conversation, but Chinese webtoons are also provided	Web browser, iOS, Android	https://www.joylada.com

Figure 3. Table of Major Players in the Thai Webtoon Industry (by the author).

Second, Korea's Kakao Webtoon entered the Thai market in June 2021. Within four days of launching its application, it recorded a revenue of 370 million won, and ranked first in Thailand's daily application download ranking. It uses simple genre classification compared to Line Webtoon, and comprises romance fantasy, romance, action, drama, Yaoi, and horror. As of 2024, there are five publicly available Thai webtoons on Kakao Webtoon, among which "Love Destiny (บุพเพสันนิวาส)" has the highest viewing of 8.5 million views. The initial work is a popular television series of the same name. Several television dramas produced are increasingly based on webtoons; however, "Love Destiny" is unique because it is a webtoon based on a television series. Another work gaining attention in Thailand is "Finding my Bias through Time Slip (ข้ามเวลาตามหาเมน)," which is a collaboration of a Korean author and a Thai illustrator.

Third, Comico is a webtoon service brand operated by NHN Comico Corporation, a subsidiary of Korea's industrial technology company, NHN. Before entering the Thai market,

Comico found success in Japan. However, recent financial setbacks from illegal replication and distribution caused withdrawal considerations from the Thai market (Kim Y., 2023). Comico is different from Line Webtoon and Kakao Webtoon because it provides Japanese and Chinese webtoons with Thai translations, and Thai webtoons constitute 15% of Comico's content as of 2019. Genres include romance, fantasy, drama, Boys' Love (BL), horror or mystery, action, comedy, and everyday life. Particularly noteworthy is the prevalence of BL works, with 37 out of the top 50 popular works falling under this genre as of May 2023. Although it sold e-books as well, Comico discontinued its web novel services in December 2022 and shifted to content IP acquisition through its in-house studio.

Fourth, the Thai company WeComics emerged as Ookbee Comics, which was a platform that provided both e-books and webtoons, and was split from the e-book platform. WeComics attracted investment from Tencent, one of China's top three webtoon platforms, and provides Korean, Thai, and numerous Chinese webtoons. It is unique because it offers a page where general users can submit their own creations, fostering active communication among readers. Genres include action or adventure, romance, daily life drama, BL, Girl's Love (GL), horror, mystery or thriller, and others. As of May 2023, among the top 10 most popular works across all genres, six are Korean works and four are Chinese works.

Sanook Comics, launched in 1998, is a webtoon site created by Thailand's largest portal site, Sanook. Unlike other platforms, it does not have a separate webtoon app and operates in its initial platform format, the web. It exclusively features works by Thai authors, and the works have different characteristics than general Korean webtoons, such as inconsistent "quality" across the works, uncolored illustrations, cut divisions similar to traditional published comics, and short lengths of two to three pages. Sanook Comics does not provide a scheduled list of publications for each day, and all publications are not regular. Genres include romance, action or adventure, comedy, daily life drama, horror, fantasy or science fiction, youth, GL, BL, and time slip.
ReadAWrite is an app developed by the Thai e-book company Meb Corporation PCL, featuring works from local Thai authors. It features webtoons and also web novels, and derivative work such as fan fiction. Similar to Sanook Comics, ReadAWrite has irregular publication schedules for all serialized content without specific daily schedules. The platform does not classify the works into genres but into original comics, doujinshi, illustrations, and fan art. The term "doujinshi" is from the Japanese word "同人誌 (doujinshi)" which refers to the overall derivative artwork.

Finally, Joylada is an e-book app with a chat-message format, ventured by Ookbee, a Thai e-book company. In addition to chat-based novels, it serializes Chinese web novels, chat-based idol fan fiction featuring pictures of actual people, and Chinese webtoons. As it is an application provided by Ookbee, it is interconnected with WeComics, which is a spin-off from Ookbee Comics, and allows users to access certain works from WeComics through Joylada.

Webtoons Perception and Consumption Patterns in Thailand
A pilot survey conducted in (month) 2023 showed that Thais perceive "webtoons" as mobile-friendly comics of diverse genres serialized in full color with a vertical scrolling format. Among actual service providers, the term "webtoon" is explicitly used only by the

Korean Line and Kakao Webtoons, while other service providers mainly use online cartoons or comics. Unlike the substantial association of K-pop or Korean dramas with Hallyu content from actual-life figures, illustrations-based webtoons are not recognized as a part of Hallyu. However, the recognition of webtoons as Hallyu's sub-content is actively increasing as transmedia productions of dramas based on webtoons.

Macromill Group (2022) conducted an online survey on 600 webtoon consumers to highlight its consumption by Thais. Female readers accounted for 56%, significantly higher than male readers. The age distribution showed that readers in their 20s and 30s constituted the largest proportion with 55%. Regarding employment, 52% were office workers, predominantly living in Bangkok and metropolitan areas. The preferred genre among Thai webtoon readers was action (18%), followed closely by romance, science fiction/fantasy, mystery, and adventure. Male readers showed a higher preference for action (30%), while female readers favored romance (22%). Teenagers had a significantly higher preference at 29% for the BL (Yaoi) genre. The primary channels through which Thai readers first encountered webtoons were advertisements on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. They commonly enjoyed webtoons before bedtime, while commuting, or during mealtimes. Many Thai readers accessed illegally distributed webtoons for reasons such as slow updates of translated new chapters already published in Korea, unavailability of desired works or chapters on official platforms in the Thai language, and dissatisfaction with the quality or speed of translations.

New Digital Content Ecosystem Created by the Thai Webtoon Platforms
Creation of a Webtoon Ecosystem in Thailand
The popularity and spread of webtoons through webtoon operators in Thailand have led to significant changes in various industries for digital content production and consumption, developing a new digital content ecosystem centered around webtoons. The increasing webtoon consumption stimulates the desire to create works and produce commercial webtoons that set successful Korean webtoon authors as role models. Additionally, this process involves the adaptation of genres traditionally more popular in Thailand, such as BL, into webtoons, a longing for domestic webtoons, and attempts at cultural exports with webtoons.

Japanese manga, which is traditionally popular in Thailand, and Korean and Chinese webtoons, which are gaining new popularity, provoke the necessity and desire for domestic webtoon production, as observed in Thailand mobile applications rankings. As of May 2023, the top-ranking apps in the Android OS popularity chart in Thailand are all related to webtoons, with the top five being Kakao Webtoon, (Line) Webtoon, Comico, Naver Webtoon, and Shueisha Manga Plus, which is related to comics albeit not a webtoon app. Notably, How To Draw Comics ranks eighth and Draw Cartoons 2 ranks twelfth. Moreover, although not in the rankings, Cartoon Video and GIF Maker was introduced on "Trending up." These apps are required for creating comics or webtoons, suggesting that the experience of consuming webtoons is translating into creative endeavors.
Furthermore, this actuates the birth of a new profession: professional webtoon author. Traditionally, Thailand has excelled in animation and cartoon creation, while comics were creative works done by fans as their hobby. However, with the popularity of webtoons and the

introduction of revenue models through operators in Thailand, webtoons are being recognized as a source of income that allows individuals who have debuted as webtoon authors to earn money, and as an opportunity for their work to be adapted into television series or published in international markets. Webtoons are now perceived as a means to become a creator. Additionally, authors of popular webtoons in Thailand are considered celebrities.

Webtoon operators aiming to discover new works and webtoon authors, especially local authors, are also interested in cultivating Thai webtoon authors and provide various opportunities. Line Webtoon and Comico regularly offer debut opportunities for Thai amateur artists within their webtoon services and receive positive responses by publishing completed works of amateur artists. Through such initiatives, operators can offer works that cater to local needs and utilize author discovery as a marketing opportunity to enhance the awareness and reach of webtoons. Moreover, they can ensure diversity through transmedia adaptation of high-quality webtoons and export them to their home country. For example, Ookbee Comics (now WeComics) recruits talent to publish works online, pays comic royalties based on views, and provides publishing and other assistance for emerging artists. Moreover, they translate Thai webtoons and export them to Indonesia, and may export them to Viet Nam, the Philippines, and Malaysia soon.

The Thai webtoon ecosystem has birthed a distinctive genre—BL, which is a genre depicting love between men with significant popularity in Thailand and is being produced in various forms of media (Baudinette, 2023). The BL genre in Thai television series, called "Series Y" (shortened from Yaoi) is significantly popular in Thailand and internationally. This upcoming field may gain as much attention as Hallyu (K-pop) in the future. The term "Y Economy" has emerged, and the Thai Ministry of Commerce has expressed active promotion of such Y content as a key export product. While BL may not yet be considered mainstream in the Thai webtoon market share, it is gradually growing. Among the 30 most popular webtoons recently in Thailand, 14 are from the BL genre, showing high preference. While Korean operators Line Webtoon and Kakao Webtoon relatively focus less on BL, Thai operator WeComics that China invested in, and Sanook Comics, feature the BL genre works prominently, ranked as major hits, suggesting local demand.

Transmediation of Thai Webtoons

The revenue model of webtoons is divided into two main markets: the primary market includes paid content, international content, and publishing; the secondary market includes transmediation, represented by one source multi-use (OSMU), where various derivative products such as advertisements, television series, movies, and games are created. Traditionally, OSMU's proportion in revenue was low. However, with the growing over-the-top (OTT) market, it is now regarded as a way to increase income. Moreover, it may re-promote the webtoon genre through the diversification of webtoons into other genres. The trends and consumption of OSMU in Thai webtoons can be observed through the popularity of Korean dramas based on Korean webtoons in Thailand, and the revival of the original Korean webtoon; the adaptation of Korean webtoons into Thai television series; and recently, the adaptation of Thai webtoons into Thai television series (Kim K., 2022)).

Examples of Korean webtoon-based Korean television series that gained much popularity in Thailand are "Business Proposal" and "Gangnam Beauty." "Business Proposal," a webtoon-

based television series produced and aired in Korea in 2022, received global appreciation as it was also simultaneously streamed on Netflix, an OTT platform. Following its airing, the original webtoon saw a tenfold increase in views in Thailand and was ranked first on Kakao Webtoon for two consecutive weeks. "Gangnam Beauty," serialized on Naver Webtoon from 2016, was also produced into a Korean television series, gaining much attention in Korea and Thailand. Later in 2022, it was announced that a local production company in Thailand was to adapt this webtoon into a television series titled "Beauty Newbie." There have been cases where webtoon-based television series or movies become significantly popular in the international market, leading to a local remake. However, this was noteworthy because it was the first time the webtoon rights were sold, and the adaptation was produced locally. Recently in Thailand, an increasing interest in the creation and consumption of domestic webtoons is observed, many of which have gained popularity. These webtoons are increasingly being adapted into television series in the OSMU format, representative works being "Teen Mom," "Love Destiny," and Loveless Heroine." "Teen Mom" was serialized on Line Webtoon in 2015, and has over 250 million views. The story is regarding a female student with unplanned pregnancy with her high school boyfriend, who decides to raise the child on her own after entering college. The reflection of the reality of Thai society, delicate psychological depictions, solid storyline, and the pretty illustration style that reminds the readers of Japanese manga are factors that contributed to its popularity. Propelled by its popularity, it was adapted into a television series in 2017, which was widely appreciated, leading to the production of a second season. This work was translated into numerous other languages and provided globally, and it was particularly popular in Japan. However, it struggled in Korea as the issue of teenage pregnancy was perceived to have been handled lightly, and unnecessary exposure and potentially provocative scenes brought discomfort. This work was well-received, and the first ever case to prove the potential and marketability of Thai webtoon authors.

"Love Destiny" was serialized on Kakao Webtoon in 2022. It was the first outcome of Kakao Webtoon's project to discover Thai webtoon authors, and was a collaboration between Korean and Thai authors. As of July 2023, it had more than 8.8 million views. The television series based on the original novel of the same name was aired on Thailand's three main terrestrial channels and gained remarkable popularity. The final episode recorded a viewership of 18.6%, which was the highest since the digital television transition in 2015. This work, also adapted into a musical and a webtoon, had changed the protagonist from a Thai woman to a Korean woman who loves Thai culture, and provided more theatrics to the story. This joint project between Korean and Thai authors is significant as it showcases the diverse possibilities of future Thai original IP.

Although not in an OSMU format, "Loveless Heroine," which was serialized on Line Webtoon, is significant. It first began to be serialized in 2021, and as of July 2023, it had 534 million views. Its narrative is from the perspective of the female protagonist in Thailand's popular traditional tale, "Khun Chang Khun Phaen." It received tremendous appreciation from the viewers. In the original novel, Wantong, the female protagonist, is a passive character forcibly controlled by the two dominant male protagonists. She is a tragic female character executed for possessing "two loving hearts" rather than serving one man. The webtoon depicts Wantong as a modern woman, who is independent, a feminist, and creates her own

destiny. The webtoon received acclaim for its beautiful art style and well-crafted narrative, establishing high completeness. The author, Chayaporn Puapornpanit (nickname/pen name: Mu), is considered a model case of a successful transition from an unknown Thai author to a webtoon author.

Conclusion

This study examined the webtoon industry's evolution into a new creative industry through platformization, transmediation, and transnational diffusion, with a focus on the Thai webtoon industry. There is a dynamic relationship in the Thai webtoon market between the entry of major Korean webtoon operators as platforms that formed the basis for developing Thai webtoons and the Thai publishing companies aided by an influx of Chinese capital that entered the market and established themselves as latecomers. While Korean webtoons dominate consumption, the recent surge in webtoon popularity has sparked a desire for domestic production, with its foundation being support from webtoon platforms. The trend of transmedia consumption is also reflected in Thailand, where the transmedia development trend is towards OSMU, where various media formats come together. Despite being small in number, Thai webtoons are translated into multiple languages and disseminated through global platforms for consumption. Several works have been popular overseas, suggesting a potential increase in overseas dissemination of Thai webtoons.

Regarding future possibilities and tasks for Thai webtoons, the Thai webtoon market may grow steadily based on expert opinions who have analyzed the future growth of Thailand's digital comic market, including webtoons, and the sustained high rankings of webtoon and comic-related apps in the Thai app market. However, with increased competition from Korean platforms, the entry of Chinese webtoon platforms, and the emergence and growth of locally produced webtoons, the webtoon market is expected to diversify. To ensure stable revenue generation and foster creative industries, strategies such as content diversification, discovering content tailored to the Thai market, collaboration with both local and foreign authors, effective promotion, and encouraging fan participation is essential.

The webtoon operators in the Thai market face several challenges, such as illegal distribution, which is reflected in actual data. Illegal distribution is hypocritical and has ambiguous advantage of dissemination and disruption. While illegal distribution helps increase awareness of the relatively unfamiliar genre of webtoons, it poses a significant obstacle to establishing webtoons as a genre and building a proper ecosystem. This is the case of Comico, the aforementioned Korean operator, who is contemplating market withdrawal owing to accumulated losses from illegal distribution. The greatest task in responding to illegal distribution is transitioning a black market into a white market. For example, Kakao Webtoon quickly captured the interest of Thai readers who wanted works previously illegally distributed in fragments. The timely announcement of licenses upon the launch of the service was also beneficial. However, blocking illegal distribution through unconditional crackdowns may only result in the loss of fans, which calls for a cautious approach. A balance must be found between blocking illegal distribution and satisfying fan demands while maximizing revenue. In the long run, diplomatic efforts, including government initiatives for copyright management systems in Thailand, and efforts by the webtoon platforms to raise awareness of copyright protection, are crucial. Thai market could strategically

consider alternative forms of revenue generation, such as increasing the proportion of the secondary market through OSMU and holding events, than solely rely on webtoon subscription revenue.

Acknowledgements

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Abstraction in Traditional Kazakh Art

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to conduct an analysis of the main tendencies of abstract art in traditional Kazakh art, identify key characteristics and stages of abstraction evolution, and elucidate their impact on artists' creativity. The research employed online surveys, questionnaires, data analysis, and organization. Statistical methods were applied to process and analyze the obtained data, including comparative analysis of mean values and calculation of t-indicators. The results of the statistical analysis indicate a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups at a significance level of 0.05. The t-statistic value (4.971) exceeds the critical t-value (1.98), allowing the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that the use of graphic tablets and drawing software significantly influences the creative process in abstraction compared to traditional art methods employed by the control group.

Keywords: *Abstract Art, Artistic Abstraction, Contemporary Art Studies, Digital Innovations in Art, Modern Trends in Art, Technological Influence on Art, Abstract Art Evolution, Traditional Kazakh Art, Kazakhstan*

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Introduction

Abstract art is an artistic style aimed at rejecting the precise representation of visual reality. This artistic movement emerged in the early 20th century when the art community abandoned traditional forms of art and actively began to explore new methods of conveying emotions and ideas through the use of non-representational and non-objective images, including non-figurative art (Nrshinga, 2023). Although abstract art was present during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), it experienced a true flourishing in the late 19th century. This development was triggered by artists distancing themselves from classical and traditional painting methods after World War I due to a growing sense of cynicism and disillusionment. The beginning of this stage can be associated with the Impressionist movement, which emphasized the possibility of art being non-representational. Subsequently, this trend evolved towards more abstract forms, manifesting itself in Cubism and Fauvism. In the early 20th century, artists rejected the copying of real objects and focused on reproducing abstract ideas arising from their minds and imaginations (Soo, 2020).

In the contemporary world, the study of traditional Kazakh art and contemporary art studies is determined by educational and methodological support that takes into account the multifaceted aspects of these two spheres. When interpreting Kazakh abstract art, it is important to consider that there is no single correct or incorrect way of perceiving or understanding this form of creativity. Abstract art always elicits diverse emotions and reactions that can vary for each observer. Despite the diversity of interpretations, abstract art has remained the subject of study for art historians and viewers for decades, constantly evoking new thoughts and reflections. It is precisely because abstract art often transforms and takes forms different from the artist's initial intent that its interpretation becomes even more complex. The active role of an informed viewer can reveal new levels of meaning and enrich the perception of abstract art through personal connections and impressions (The Kelly Museum, 2021). In the 1950s and 1960s, Kazakh art experienced the development of abstract forms in painting, reflecting shifts in cultural and social paradigms. During the 1970s and 1980s, a period known as the "Thaw," abstraction emerged as a tool for expressing emotions and individual experiences, contributing to the transformation of the urban image. This era was marked by a shift in visual practices, where realistic imagery gradually evolved into metaphorical and symbolic interpretations, reflecting a new cultural reality. Thus, the final decades of the 20th century demonstrated how abstract forms became a means of profound cultural reflection on the changes within Kazakh society (Baturina, 2022).

Art is a unique experience that is difficult to convey in words due to its personal and non-verbal nature of impact on people. The experience of a work of art requires letting go of the need to express feelings in words and surrendering oneself to the influence of the artwork to feel its emotional depth (Redacted, 2016).

Thus, abstraction in traditional Kazakh art evolves into a deeper and more multifaceted process, serving not only as a form of artistic expression but also as a powerful means of preserving and transmitting cultural heritage. This approach creates a unique interaction where abstract forms and symbols become a bridge between the past and the present (Shevtsova, 2016). Understanding abstract art requires perceiving it as it is, without attempting to fix the exact meaning of the imagery (Thaneeya, 2023). Abstract painting,

defined by the absence of a recognizable plot, uses colors, lines, outlines, and forms to convey emotions and ideas. The emphasis in such art lies in the arrangement of elements and their interaction to create a harmonious or contrasting composition. In the context of abstract art, the freedom of individual interpretation for each viewer is crucial (Stojilovic, 2017).

Color serves as a fundamental element used to evoke various emotions and moods, where bold and bright shades can convey energy, while muted tones express tranquility. Additionally, artists employ brush gestures and textured surfaces to create a sense of spontaneity and dynamism, adding depth and visual interest to their creations (Gupta, 2024).

Contemporary art, created in the 21st century, is defined by a dynamic combination of materials, methods, concepts, and narratives that challenge traditional boundaries. Transitional art, using modern materials and updated finishes, blends with traditional images, characterized by clear identification and an elegant appearance. Abstractionism is defined by color manipulations without a recognizable image; contemporary art reimagines familiar images, and transitional art uses broad strokes and bold colors to exaggerate well-known narratives (Art & Company, 2019).

From the pioneers of abstractionism, such as Kandinsky and Malevich, to later innovators like Pollock and Rothko, abstract art continues its evolutionary development, shaping the perception of the diversity of art. Its influence is not confined solely to painting but extends to sculpture, architecture, and design (Nguyen, 2023). At the same time, while it may initially appear that technology and art represent opposing aspects of creativity, considering contemporary trends in the art sphere, it is important to explore the possibilities of integrating technology to enrich the artistic process and stimulate creativity (Schukei, 2019). This is particularly relevant in the context of abstract art, where artists explore new expressive means, and the use of technology can serve not only as a tool for creation but also as a source of innovation, opening new horizons in abstract artistic expression.

The article on the influence of abstraction in traditional Kazakh art provides a pertinent perspective on the artistic realm, considering national traditions. It makes a significant contribution to understanding the artistic landscape by drawing attention to the trends and styles inherent in this direction within Kazakh culture. Special emphasis is placed on the interaction between traditions and innovations, as well as the impact of modern technologies on the creative process, contributing to the formation of unique abstract works of art. The article serves not only as a source of information for students of art history but also as a valuable resource for artists seeking to broaden their understanding of traditions and innovations in the context of abstraction in Kazakh art.

Literature Review

Abstract art, with its forms and techniques that do not reproduce specific objects or scenes, serves as an effective means for exploring complex or challenging ideas that are difficult to convey through representational art (The Art Story, 2023). One significant impact of abstract art on culture lies in its support for global cultural exchange. Abstract art transcends cultural and national boundaries as it is detached from representative images of the physical world. This has contributed to the spread of the style on an international level and gaining recognition from diverse audiences (Ezee Art, 2023).

In a specific direction of contemporary abstract art, individual artists push the concept of expressionism to extreme expressions, creating works that can be characterized as absolutely grotesque and prompting reflection on the notions of mass consumption and excess (Lesso, 2023).

The following scholarly work explores the relationship between Global Image Properties (GIPs) and viewer preferences, focusing on the category of abstract art (Hayn-Leichsenring et al., 2020). The authors employ computational network science and empirical methods to examine GIPs and subjective preferences. The results confirm that GIPs do not have a determining influence on assessments of abstract art. The network structure of abstract art images is investigated using two approaches - verbal descriptions and GIPs. The semantic network was found to be capable of predicting preferences and artistic style, underscoring the importance of verbal descriptors. Overall, the article emphasizes the necessity of considering the diversity within abstract art in its empirical analysis and underscores the role of verbal descriptions in shaping subjective assessments.

One important theme under investigation is the influence of empathy on the aesthetic perception of representational and abstract art. In this study, the authors examined how the ability to feel emotional content (Einfühlung) affects participants' bodily reactions and subjective evaluations of paintings (Gernot, Pelowski, and Leder, 2018). The research included measuring participants' empathic engagement, and their bodily reactions using EMG and GSR, as well as assessing art through various aesthetic dimensions. Participants with higher levels of emotional contagion demonstrated more intense bodily reactions and greater affinity towards art, encompassing both representational and abstract art. The results affirm the hypothesis of the significance of empathy for aesthetic perception of art, indicating a close empathic resonance with the emotional content of the artworks.

In a study investigating art therapy as a non-pharmacological method in the treatment of mental disorders, the authors conducted a systematic literature review focusing on the theoretical foundations, clinical applications, and prospects of this approach (Hu et al., 2021). Concentrating on drawings and paintings within the context of art therapy, the primary objective was to determine the effectiveness of this method in treating mental disorders, which may also be associated with abstract art. The review, encompassing 413 sources, confirms that art therapy, particularly involving painting and drawing, is successfully applied in the treatment of patients with depressive disorders, anxiety, cognitive impairments, dementia, Alzheimer's disease, schizophrenia, and autism, reflecting the diversity and importance of abstract art in defining emotional expression. Thus, the results indicate that abstract art can be not only a source of aesthetic pleasure but also an effective tool for expressing and treating mental states.

This study aims to investigate the international scientific heritage in the field of art therapy through the use of bibliometric analysis (Rodriguez Novo et al., 2021). The article identifies the absence of prior bibliometric research in this area, and the authors seek to address this gap by offering a broad and in-depth view of the knowledge structure in art therapy. Various parameters are subjected to analysis, including document type, country, journal, and institution, as well as the classification of primary research directions and the themes of the most cited articles. The results of the study indicate that 563 works have been published in 250 journals in the field of art therapy since 1958. The annual growth rate was

7.3%, with an average of 8.7 publications per year. The study also explores authorship, thematic variability, citation patterns, and the main research directions. This research can contribute to expanding our understanding of how abstract art is employed in art therapy to achieve psychological well-being and rehabilitation. Examining the use of abstract art within art therapy can reveal its potential benefits and effectiveness.

The objective of this research is to explore how visual art, particularly abstract and representational, generates meaning, focusing on the difference in the universality of the language between these two forms of art (Schepman and Rodway, 2021). Through computer and linguistic analysis of 1,918 texts provided by 49 adult participants, the authors conclude that while representational art has more shared meaning, abstract art also evokes meanings that surpass the basic level. The obtained data not only enhance the understanding of the perception difference between abstract and representational art but also may serve as a foundation for refining theoretical models of aesthetic evaluation.

In the subsequent article, the question of the universality of aesthetic perception of art is raised, and its correlation with cultural and artistic expertise is identified (Darda and Cross, 2022). It is noted that previous research has indicated a certain prevalence of representational art over abstract art and highlights a tendency for greater affinity towards art reflecting one's own culture. The results obtained point to two main conclusions: firstly, they broaden and delimit our understanding of the universality of aesthetic perception, emphasizing the importance of considering the diversity of cultures and forms of art when examining empirical aesthetics models; secondly, they highlight the role of artistic experience as a tool to counteract biases.

Problem Statement
The objective is to conduct an analysis of the primary trends in abstract art within traditional Kazakh art, identifying key characteristics and stages of abstraction evolution, and elucidating their influence on artists' creativity.

Research Tasks:
1. This study aims to investigate and evaluate the influence of abstraction in traditional Kazakh art on contemporary culture.

2. Determination of Key Characteristics of Abstraction:
.   The primary objective of this section is to define the fundamental characteristics that distinguish abstract art. The examination will focus on the identification and analysis of expressive elements frequently utilized in abstract works, including but not limited to line, form, color spectrum, and texture.

3.. Analysis of the Impact of Technology on Abstract Art:
    This segment involves an exploration of the influence of modern technological innovations on the creative process within the realm of abstract art. It seeks to ascertain the technological tools and techniques employed by artists in creating abstract works and to discern the consequent effects on the aesthetic aspects of their creations.
4. Investigation into the Impact of Contemporary Technologies on the Creative Process in Abstract Art among Students.

The collected data will undergo statistical processing for an objective comparison of results and the formulation of conclusions regarding the influence of technologies on abstract art within the scope of this research.

Methods and Materials
Study Design
At the initial stage of the research, a comprehensive examination was conducted to define abstract art and assess its influence on contemporary culture. The primary objective encompassed evaluating the impact of abstract art on contemporary culture, taking into consideration its role in the development and evolution of artistic thinking. The second aim of the study was directed towards determining the key characteristics of abstraction and the distinctive features of abstraction in traditional Kazakh art. This involved the identification and analysis of expressive elements commonly employed in works of abstract art, such as line, form, color spectrum, and texture. The third aspect of the research pertained to the analysis of the influence of technology on abstract art. Emphasis was primarily placed on examining the technological innovations and tools employed by artists in the creation of abstract works, as well as elucidating the repercussions of such technological integration on the aesthetics of their works.

The second stage encompassed the execution of an experiment, involving a cohort of 114 students enrolled in the [Redacted] Faculty at [Redacted] University. The participants were stratified into two groups: a control group consisting of 57 individuals and an experimental group comprising another 57 individuals. The objective of the experiment was to investigate the impact of contemporary technologies, particularly graphic tablets and drawing software, on the creative process within the realm of abstract art among students in the Faculty of [Redacted].

The third stage involved the administration of a survey to educators, conducted to examine their attitudes and beliefs regarding the utilization of modern technologies in teaching abstract art. The survey focused on educators with experience in using modern technologies to teach abstract art. The target audience included art instructors aged 25 to 65 with at least three years of teaching experience, who had implemented innovative teaching methods, as well as methodologists with practical experience in applying advanced pedagogical approaches in art education. The survey comprised a series of questions designed to ascertain the instructors' experience with contemporary technologies, the students' perception of these technologies, and the instructors' readiness to implement new teaching methods and tools. The survey was conducted using the online platform Google Forms. Participants gained access to the survey through a link distributed among educators via their corporate email accounts. Participation in the survey required access to a computer or mobile device with internet connectivity. Participants received a link to the survey, which directed them to the digital questionnaire. The form contained questions for participants to select predefined responses or provide open-ended answers. Within the survey, participants could navigate through pages, review previous responses, and contribute their input. This approach facilitated the collection of data from survey participants conveniently and efficiently, ensuring the preservation and analysis of the acquired responses.

Sample for the Experiment
The experiment involved 114 students, comprising 53 males and 61 females. These students were affiliated with the [Redacted] Faculty, specializing in "Design," at [Redacted] University. The study encompassed two participant groups - a control group (57 participants) and an experimental group (57 participants).
The duration of the experiment spanned 4 days.

Experimental Group: Participants in the experimental group were provided with a detailed overview of available technologies, specifically graphic tablets and highly efficient drawing programs. They received instructions on utilizing the tools and functionalities that these technologies offer for creating abstract works of art.

A technical support specialist conducted practical sessions in which students had the opportunity to experiment with the features of tablets and programs. Acquired skills encompassed the use of colors, strokes, layers, and other tools to craft expressive compositions.

Creative Task: Students were assigned a creative task to produce an abstract artistic canvas using the acquired technical skills and a creative approach. Instructions were formulated to allow students to freely express their ideas and emotions. Art instructors and technical support personnel guided participants, assisting them in overcoming potential challenges and paving the way for creative expression.
The results of the experiment were assessed both qualitatively and quantitatively, taking into consideration the quality of the artwork, the expressiveness in utilizing technical capabilities, and each student's approach to the creative task.

In the experimental group of the experiment, students from the Faculty of [Redacted] were granted access to various drawing and creative software, specifically:

1. Adobe Photoshop
This Adobe program, primarily utilized for image editing, also boasts extensive features for creativity and drawing (Figure 1). Graphic tablets are fully supported, enabling artists to create abstract masterpieces.
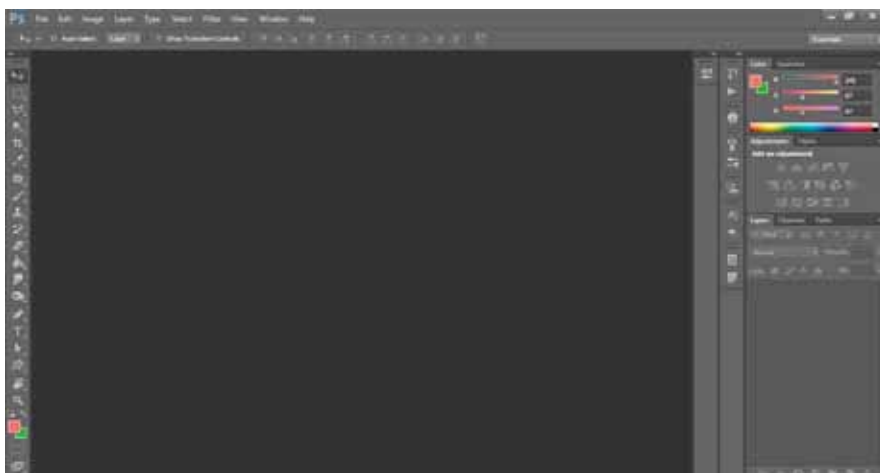
Figure 1. Adobe Photoshop Program Interface.

2. Corel Painter

This program was originally designed for drawing (Figure 2). It not only facilitates the manipulation of existing images but also allows the creation of new ones. Corel Painter serves as a true simulator of live drawing. In the realm of digital drawing, the program is meticulously crafted, serving as a genuine professional tool tailored for artists.

Figure 2. Corel Painter Application Interface.

3. Krita

Free and open-source, Krita is suitable for various creative tasks. Its interface and functions resemble traditional graphic programs (Figure 3).
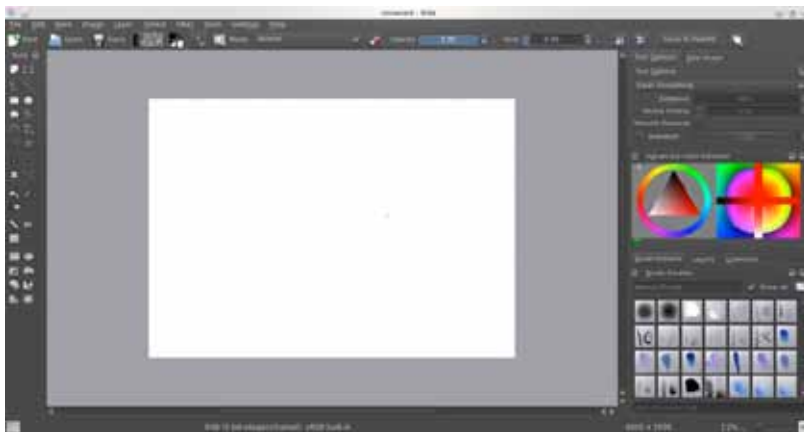
Figure 3. Krita Application Interface.

4. Autodesk SketchBook
- Another tool for digital drawing that enables the use of graphic tablets to create impressive abstract works (Figure 4).
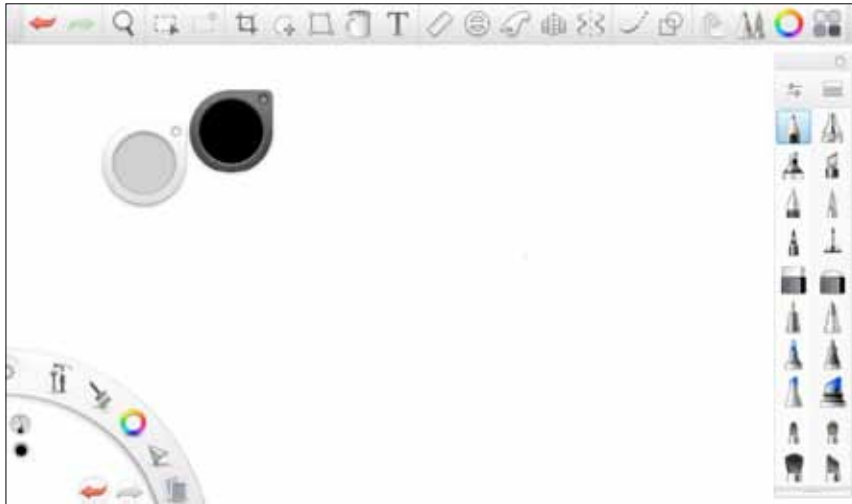
Figure 4. Autodesk SketchBook Application Interface.

Each of these programs possesses unique capabilities and tools, enabling students to experiment with various styles, textures, and colors in their abstract works of art.
Control Group: Students from the same faculty but working with traditional materials. This group utilized conventional oil paints, watercolors, pencils, and other traditional tools for artistic expression. An essential characteristic of the control group was their lack of access to modern technologies, such as graphic tablets and drawing programs, rendering their creative approach more traditional and rooted in conventional artistic methods. This approach facilitated the comparison of the impact of modern technologies on the creative process with the traditional method of creativity using standard materials.

- The creative outcomes from both groups were evaluated, considering originality, expressiveness, and technical execution.
- Feedback from participants regarding their experience and enjoyment of the creative process was collected.

This experiment facilitated an in-depth analysis of the impact of modern technologies on the creative process of students engaged in abstract art.
The survey conducted after the experiment aimed to gather additional data and impressions from participants (Appendix A "Student Survey").

Sampling for the Survey
The objective of the survey among educators was to elucidate their attitudes and opinions regarding the use of modern technologies in the educational process within the realm of

abstract art. The survey included 100 participants who served as instructors at [Redacted] University. The sample comprised both male and female educators ranging in age from 25 to 66 years.

Within the survey framework, educators were presented with a series of questions addressing their experience with the use of modern technologies in the educational process, the perception of such technologies by students, and their readiness to implement new teaching methods and tools. Questions also encompassed aspects of interaction with students, changes in the creative process, and the overall impact of technology usage on the quality of education in the field of abstract art. The survey results served as a valuable source of information for further research and the enhancement of art education programs. The questionnaire was meticulously designed to accurately reflect the research objectives and obtain the necessary information (Appendix B "Educator Survey").

Statistical Analysis

A collection of relevant data constituted the initial phase in statistical calculations. Data were sourced from various channels, specifically derived from the experiment, surveys, and observations. A Student's t-test (or t-test) was employed for comparing the mean values of two independent samples and for testing hypotheses concerning the equality of mean values in these samples. Following the fulfillment of assumptions for applying Student's t-test, the computation of the t-statistic and significance level (p-value) was accomplished. A Student's t-test facilitated the assessment of the statistical significance of the difference in mean values between two independent samples, aiding in discerning whether this difference is incidental or substantive.

Ethical Issues

The article effectively aligns with the conducted research, the details of which are diligently reported. The narrative about this investigation is characterized by its original, scholarly, and veracious nature. The article conspicuously lacks instances of verbatim replication of external expressions or ideas, and concurrently upholds the confidentiality of the participants who underwent survey procedures. All data acquired during the research endeavor has undergone meticulous processing and is disseminated in the form of anonymized outcomes.

Research Limitations

Throughout the investigation, several limitations and challenges have been identified. One of the primary challenges encompassed restricted access to certain sources and resources, thereby complicating the task of data collection and analysis. Engaging with archives and documents pertinent to the research theme also encountered difficulties, as some archives proved to be incomplete or restricted in access, impeding the attainment of comprehensive and reliable information. Another limitation of the study pertained to the limited number of students included in the experimental sample, potentially impacting the overall representativeness and universality of the findings. The sample size failed to account for the full

diversity of the student population, underscoring the importance of acknowledging that the context and characteristics of the selected sample may influence the external validity of the research results.

Results
Survey Results
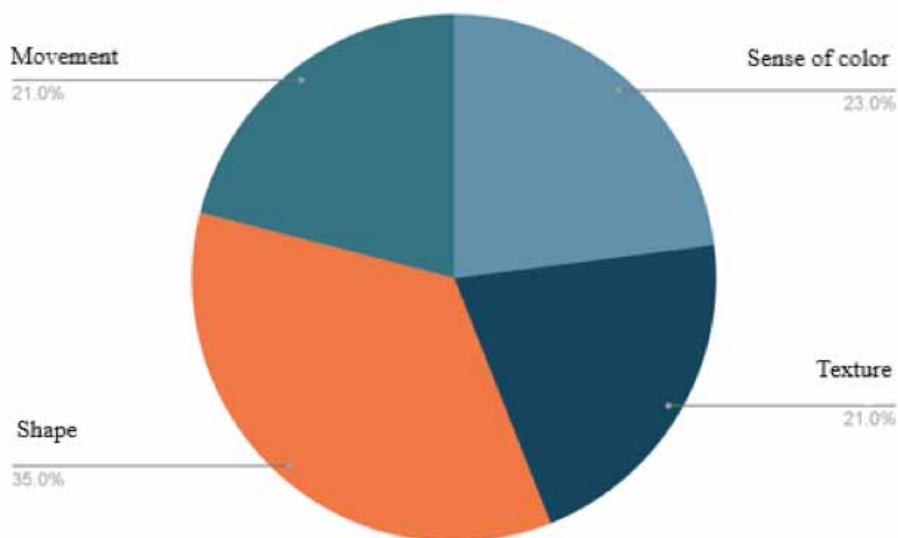
Figure 5. Elements of Abstract Art Considered Key for Students' Development According to Instructors.

In abstract art, each of the key elements holds its significance and influences the creation of a unique artistic expression. The sense of color (23%) stands out as a foundational aspect, given that colors not only define the visual appearance of a work but also convey emotional undertones (Figure 5). Students are required to experiment with the palette, selecting colors by their emotions and intentions. Texture (21%) introduces a crucial element into artistic composition, contributing to both visual and tactile perception. Replicating various textures enables the creation of deep and nuanced images, expanding the artistic possibilities available to students. Form (35%) constitutes the foundation of any work in traditional Kazakh art and abstract art, it can be approached from a non-traditional perspective. Students must cultivate the ability to discern and utilize forms as a significant means of conveying ideas and concepts. Movement (21%) in abstract art can be perceived not only as the physical movement of objects but also as the energetic flow or dynamics of interaction among the elements of a composition. Developing the skill to convey movement aids in crafting dynamic and captivating compositions.

Students must cultivate the ability to abstract from specific objects, as it unveils boundless possibilities for creativity. They should learn to perceive abstraction in the surrounding world and transform it into their own unique and expressive ideas. Conveying emotions through one's artistic expression demands from students not only technical skill but also a profound understanding of their feelings and their reflection in the creative process.

The integration of contemporary technologies into the instruction of abstract art constitutes a pivotal phase, providing students with boundless opportunities for self-expression

and creativity. This affords them access to innovative tools and platforms that facilitate experimentation with various artistic techniques. Digital technologies enable students not only to refine their traditional skills but also to explore new horizons in their artistic expression. Modern drawing programs and graphic tablets empower students to create unique works employing diverse colors, shapes, and textures, fostering the development of their artistic style and contributing to the formation of a personal approach to abstract expression.

Furthermore, digital tools enable the swift and efficient creation and editing of works, promoting a deeper exploration and enhancement of artistic skills. An essential advantage of utilizing modern technologies is the opportunity for students to engage in online communities and exchange ideas with artists worldwide. This not only broadens their artistic perception but also establishes a conducive environment for mutual learning and inspiration.

Thus, the incorporation of contemporary technologies into the instruction of abstract art not only enriches the learning process but also assists students in unlocking their creative potential, paving the way for self-expression and a profound understanding of contemporary artistic trends.

Respondent A:
"I regularly incorporate modern technologies, such as graphic tablets and drawing programs, into my educational process. This enables students to more effectively materialize their creative ideas and develop skills in contemporary art."
Respondent B:
"The readiness of students to use modern technologies in their creative process varies. Some students exhibit a high level of readiness and interest in digital tools, while others may lack experience or confidence in their utilization."
Respondent C:
"There are numerous positive aspects to using modern technologies in the instruction of abstract art. Specifically, it allows for the creation of interactive lessons, promotes the development of creative skills, and enables students to experiment with new ideas."
Respondent D:
"One of the challenges in utilizing technologies in the educational process is adapting to constant updates in software and hardware. To address this issue, I continuously update my knowledge and provide students with regular training on new technologies."

These responses indicate the active utilization of modern technologies by the instructor, the diversity of students' readiness for digital tools, the positive impact of technologies on the instructional process, and the identification of specific challenges along with proposed solutions.

When employing technologies to stimulate creative potential, approximately 85% of instructors actively incorporate interactive exercises and projects, identifying them as effective means to foster students' creative processes. According to educators' assessments, the integration of modern technologies enhances the quality of education in the field of abstract art, a sentiment concurred with by around 90% of respondents. They perceive this as an opportunity for students not only to develop traditional skills but also to experiment

and engage in online environments. Regarding students' attitudes toward technology, 75% of instructors note a positive reception of this approach, highlighting that some students actively utilize technology for their creative development. While about 25% of instructors point out potential resistance from students, especially those less familiar with digital tools, 80% of instructors see their role in facilitating adaptation and raising awareness of the advantages of technology use for all students (Figure 6). These responses attest to a broad spectrum of positive dynamics in the use of technology in teaching abstract art, as well as educators' readiness to adapt to individual needs and perceptions of students.

Figure 6. Drawing Programs Recommended for Student Use in the Educational Process.

- Krita (27%):

Krita is a powerful drawing tool that is open for use and has a free license. According to instructors, it captures the attention of students who appreciate its wide array of tools for realizing their creative ideas. This program provides opportunities for experimentation and the creation of various artistic works.

- Corel Painter (13%):

Corel Painter distinguishes itself with its ability to simulate various traditional drawing materials, allowing students to experiment with textures and effects similar to those achievable on traditional mediums such as paper or canvas. Instructors recommend this program for those seeking diversity in creative possibilities.

- Adobe Photoshop (35%):

Adobe Photoshop remains an integral part of the creative process for students. With advanced graphics editing and processing features, this program is ideal for those looking to develop their technical skills. According to instructors, it opens up broad possibilities for creating impressive works.

- Autodesk SketchBook (25%):

Autodesk SketchBook is a program that provides ample space for creativity and drawing experiments. It is particularly useful for students who appreciate the simplicity and effi-

ciency of the interface. Instructors note that this program contributes to the rapid development of artistic potential and the creation of unique art pieces.

These programs not only facilitate the study of abstract art but also expand the toolkit for self-expression, contributing to the development of students' unique artistic styles.

The responses indicate that in the teaching process of abstract art, emphasis is placed on the importance of relinquishing details and forming an image through the use of lines, colors, and textures. The instructional tasks employed are designed to develop the principles of abstraction and encompass stages of detaching from reality to create a personal voice in abstract expression. It is noted that instructors acknowledge the significance of artistic elements such as lines, colors, and textures in shaping artistic expression. This approach aids students in cultivating their creative concepts and language within the realm of abstract art.

Percentage Analysis:
- Emphasis on the importance of relinquishing details and forming an image: 30%
- Focus on developing principles of abstraction: 25%
- Utilization of artistic elements in instruction: 20%
- Integration of stages of detachment from reality: 15%
- Emphasis on creating a personal voice in abstract expression: 10%

The survey results also revealed that among the potential styles inherent in Kazakh traditional abstract art, the following are highlighted:

Ornamental Style:
Participants (28%) in the survey pointed to the use of various types of ornaments in Kazakh art, which may incorporate the abstraction of natural forms or abstract geometric patterns. This style attests to the preservation of traditions and dedication to natural and geometric forms.

Geometric Style:
Instructors (33%) perceive the use of abstract geometric forms as a primary element in visual art within traditional Kazakh art. This may indicate the careful use of geometric symmetry and proportions in traditional compositions.

Symbolic Style (17%):
Survey results indicate the use of abstract images that incorporate symbolism with deep cultural or religious significance for the Kazakh people. Symbols of nature, traditions, and religion may be stylized or abstracted, emphasizing the importance of conveying specific values through visual language.

Textural Style:
Respondents (22%) noted the use of abstract textures and surfaces as a characteristic feature of traditional Kazakh art. This style can add a sense of materiality and depth to artworks, highlighting the artists' skill in working with various textural elements.
The significance of these results lies in understanding the key aspects of traditional Kazakh abstract art, which are crucial elements of cultural heritage and can be utilized for the preservation and development of artistic tradition in the future.

Experiment Results

Evaluation of the Creative Process Using Modern Technologies:

Positive Aspects:

Respondent A: "*I assess my creative process positively because modern technologies, particularly a graphic tablet and drawing programs, provide me with the opportunity to experiment with various styles and techniques.*"

Respondent B: "*The convenience and speed of using a graphic tablet allow me to quickly materialize my ideas without the limitations of traditional materials.*"

Negative Aspects:

Respondent C: "*However, there are certain challenges, such as the lack of a physical feel of working with materials and the absence of nuances that may be important for some artists.*"

Satisfaction Percentage with this Approach:

Positive: 80%

Negative: 20%

When evaluating the creative process using traditional artistic materials, it was observed that positive aspects include the unique texture and color depth, imparting a distinct character to the artworks, as well as the interaction with the drawing process itself. However, it is noted that this approach may be more labor-intensive and require greater effort compared to the use of modern technologies. The overall satisfaction percentage indicates that, despite certain challenges, the majority of students appraise the positive aspects of traditional drawing methods at 50%, while the negative aspects constitute 50% of their perception.

New Opportunities through the Use of Modern Technologies:

Respondent A: "*The use of a graphic tablet and drawing programs has opened new horizons for me in the creative process, such as quick error correction, experiments with textures, and interaction with real artistic communities online.*"

Respondent B: "*The ability to store and easily share my works in electronic format has expanded my audience and interaction with other creative individuals.*"

Satisfaction Percentage with this Approach:

Positive: 90%

Negative: 10%

Respondents' answers indicate the positive impact of modern technologies on the creative process in the field of abstract art.

Respondent A: notes that the use of a graphic tablet and drawing programs has opened new possibilities for him, such as quick error correction. This suggests that modern technologies enable artists to materialize ideas more quickly and efficiently, enhancing the process of creating and editing artworks.

Respondent B: highlights that the ability to store and easily share works in electronic format has expanded his audience and interaction with other creative individuals. This underscores the social aspect of using technologies, allowing artists to communicate,

exchange experiences, and interact in online communities, which can stimulate creative development.

In summary, the responses emphasize that modern technologies not only facilitate the creation process but also open new opportunities for interaction and communication in the contemporary art environment.

Challenges in using modern technologies:
- Students (73%) point out adaptation difficulties to new programs and equipment, typical when transitioning to modern technologies. It is also noted that there is a potential loss of the traditional sense of material, which may impact the organic nature of the creative process.

- Enhancement of creativity and expansion of expressive possibilities:
  The majority of students (86%) respond positively to the opportunities presented by modern technologies. They highlight the ability to experiment with new techniques and quickly materialize ideas, positively influencing the development of creative potential.

- Use of technologies in the future:
  The majority of students (65%) express a desire to continue using modern technologies in the future as they contribute to facilitating work and open space for creative experiments.

Impact of technologies on interest in abstract art:
- Students (88%) note a positive influence of modern technologies on their perception of abstract art. Technologies enable them to view abstraction from a new perspective and open up new possibilities for expression.

- Impact of modern technologies on the speed and efficiency of the creative process:
  The majority of students (78%) point to a significantly positive impact of modern technologies on the speed and efficiency of their creative process. This is evident in the ability to quickly realize ideas and make adjustments without significant delays.

- The most beneficial aspects of modern technologies for artistic expression:
  Over 80% of students consider the editing and layering functions in drawing programs to be the most useful for their artistic expression. This provides the opportunity to experiment and create more complex compositions.

Interaction with other students during collaborative creative processes using technologies:
- Collaborative work in an online environment is an effective means of communication for the majority of students (82%), allowing them to exchange ideas and interact with peers, even if they are in different locations. This contributes to broadening horizons and sharing experiences.

In the context of abstract art, it can be stated that modern technologies significantly influence the creative process among students, simplifying it and opening new possibilities for self-expression. The majority of participants highly value the speed and efficiency of using

digital tools, citing positive aspects such as the opportunity to experiment and engage in online communities. Overall, a positive trend in the perception of modern technologies in the context of abstract art can be discerned, as they aid in developing and expanding the creative potential of students (Table in Figure 7).

	Control group	Experimental group	t-statistics	p-value
Sample Size	57	57		
Mean Value	65	72		
Standard Deviation	8	7		
t-Statistic			≈4.971	
p-Value				<0.05

Figure 7. Table of Statistical Significance Test using Student's t-test between Two Data Groups.

As a result, let's compare the obtained t-value (approximately 4.971) with the critical value: 4.971 > 1.98. Since the obtained t-value is greater than the critical value, we can reject the null hypothesis at a significance level of 0.05. In other words, there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups (below table in figure 8).

	Mean
Degrees of freedom	112
Significance level	0.05
Critical t-value	1.98
t-statistic value	≈4.971

Figure 8. Table showing esults of the t-test for Group Comparison.

The table in figure 8 contains data used for conducting Student's t-test to compare the mean values of two groups, the experimental and control groups, each with a sample size of 57. Degrees of Freedom (df) indicate the number of degrees of freedom for the test, in our case, df = 112. The significance level indicates the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis that the researcher considers acceptable; in this case, the significance level is 0.05, which is a commonly accepted level. The Critical t-value is the value of t that defines the boundary beyond which the null hypothesis can be rejected at a given significance level and degrees of freedom; in this case, the critical t-value is 1.98. The t-statistic value is the computed t-value using the formula for Student's t-test, which is used to compare the mean values of two groups; in this case, the t-statistic value is approximately 4.971. Comparing the t-statistic value to the critical t-value helps determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the groups. In this case, since the t-statistic value (4.971) exceeds the critical t-value (1.98) at the given significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis of the statistical significance of the difference between the groups is accepted. Thus, the average score of the experimental group was 72 points compared to 65 points in the control group. The t-test confirmed that this difference is not random—it is significant enough to conclude a genuine positive impact of digital tools on the educational process.

Thus, 78% of students noted increased efficiency and expanded opportunities for experimenting with forms and techniques (80% of users positively evaluated the editing and layer management features), indicating that the integration of graphic tablets and specialized software transforms the creative process, enabling faster realization of ideas. At the same time, a certain loss of tactile connection with the material was observed (73% of students), which is partially offset by new opportunities for creative self-expression and collaboration. Educators (90%) highlighted improvements in the quality of education and an expanded methodological toolkit, including opportunities for remote learning and intercultural exchange.

The statistically significant research findings demonstrate not only the technological evolution of the creative process but also a paradigm shift in art education and practice. Digital tools create new possibilities for preserving and reinterpreting cultural heritage, particularly in the context of traditional Kazakh art, where 33% of educators emphasized the importance of the geometric style, and 28% highlighted ornamental patterns. These findings underscore the potential of technology to bridge the gap between traditional and modern forms of artistic expression.

Future research in Kazakh art and abstraction holds significant potential for further development, especially in the context of integrating modern digital technologies into traditional artistic practices. Subsequent studies could focus on the integration of VR/AR technologies, which could open new horizons for the development and visualization of abstractions, as well as the creation of new methods for preserving and reinterpreting traditional techniques through digital tools.

Discussion

The primary purpose of abstraction in art is to transcend the narration of specific stories and, instead, encourage the viewer's active participation and boundless imagination (Lobo Pop Art, 2020). Abstract art seeks to create a non-material and emotional experience that is unique to each individual, considering their individuality and experiences at a particular moment (Barr Jr, 2019). This form of creativity does not confine the viewer within specific boundaries or details but intentionally leaves room for interpretation and personal sensation (Elliott, 2017). Abstraction in art becomes a platform for free experimentation, where each person can find their unique perception and meaning (Street, 2022).

Outstanding works of abstract art, such as Wassily Kandinsky's "Composition X" from 1939, Piet Mondrian's "Composition II in Red, Blue, and Yellow" from 1930, Jackson Pollock's "Convergence" from 1952, Gerhard Richter's "Abstract Painting 599" from 1986, and Helen Frankenthaler's "Mountains and Sea" from 1952, serve as examples of this diversity of interpretations and aesthetic impressions (Adobe Express, 2023). Artists inspired by traditional Kazakh motifs use abstraction to expand the boundaries of traditional art and give it a contemporary dimension.

Such a synthesis of ancient traditions and modern artistic trends not only enriches the art scene in Kazakhstan but also deepens the understanding of cultural heritage, making it relevant and accessible to the contemporary generation. Thus, abstraction in traditional Kazakh art becomes an integral part of the evolution and preservation of cultural values, opening new perspectives for both artists and viewers.

At a significance level (alpha = 0.05), the null hypothesis that the mean creative outcomes of students in the control and experimental groups are equal is rejected. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, indicating a statistically significant difference between the groups. Considering the obtained results, it can be stated that the experimental group, which utilized graphic tablets and highly effective drawing programs, exhibited a higher average creative outcome compared to the control group, which employed traditional artistic materials. It is essential to take into account that the experimental group received a detailed overview of the technologies, which may influence their creative outcomes.

Overall, the results suggest a positive impact of using graphic tablets and drawing programs on the creative process compared to traditional artistic methods. Special attention should be given to abstraction in art, which proved to be more expressive in the experimental group. The utilization of modern technologies, such as graphic tablets, contributes to a higher level of abstraction in the creative expressions of participants compared to the traditional artistic methods used by the control group. This finding may have significant implications for understanding the interaction between art and technology in the contemporary world and underscores the importance of abstraction as an artistic means of self-expression.

The survey results underscore the importance of educational and methodological support for comprehending and studying traditional Kazakh art and its reflection in contemporary art studies. Successful educational and methodological support in this context should consider the diversity of styles identified in the research, such as ornamental, geometric, symbolic, and textural styles. Traditional art studies should encompass a thorough examination of cultural and religious aspects underlying the symbols and motifs used in abstract art. This will enable a deeper understanding of the context and semantics of traditional elements employed in artworks.

An integral component of educational and methodological support is the exploration of contemporary trends in art studies, allowing students and researchers to consider traditional Kazakh art within the framework of modern debates and discern its role in the contemporary world. Thus, the integration of traditional art studies with elements of modern art studies will create a comprehensive approach to the study and understanding of Kazakh abstract art, providing both profound historical analysis and relevance to its manifestations in the contemporary artistic environment.

Numerous studies in the field of abstract art and its impact on mental health point to the significant potential of art therapy in reducing depression levels and enhancing mental well-being (Jensen and Bonde, 2018; Yang et al., 2021). These studies focus on the use of artistic interventions, particularly abstract art, as an effective means to improve the mental state of patients in medical settings. The results confirm that the implementation of art therapy through abstract art contributes to the reduction of depressive symptoms and promotes overall mental improvement. These findings underscore the promise and importance of utilizing abstract art within the framework of art therapy to achieve positive outcomes in the realm of mental health.

Research in the field of determining the impact of art expertise on the perception of visual art by viewers suggests that expertise can influence the interpretation of artworks through contextual elements, such as the titles of the pieces (Mullennix and Robinet, 2018). This is

particularly crucial in the context of abstract art, where comprehension and perception may vary. In another study, an artist and researcher in the field of artificial intelligence emphasize the examination of visual abstraction and the politics of visual ambiguity (Zeilinger, 2023). This approach unveils the challenges involved in creating and perceiving abstract art for both humans and artificial intelligence systems. In the realm of aesthetic studies, understanding how factors influencing the perception of beauty can affect the evaluation of art is crucial (Sidhu et al., 2018). These findings become significant in the exploration of the aesthetics of abstract art and its reception by audiences. Furthermore, another study delves into the aesthetic evaluation of art and its dependence on various observational factors (Bimler et al., 2019). This contributes to uncovering how expertise influences the perception and assessment of abstract art, which can be pivotal in understanding the nuances of this form of creativity.

There is a scholarly work examining the development of artistic talent in children, focusing on a new type of gifted children—artists expressing their creative essence through abstract art (Drake and Jose, 2023). This study demonstrates that giftedness in the realm of art can manifest not only in realistic expressions but also in the ability to engage with abstract art.

Thus, all these studies make a significant contribution to understanding aspects of abstract art, expanding our perception of its reception and significance for both experts and the general audience. In comparison with other research in the field of art perception and the influence of technology on the creative process, the results of our study indicate a positive impact of using graphic tablets and drawing programs on creative outcomes. Special attention should be paid to the aspect of abstraction in art. The results suggest that the use of graphic tablets contributes to more pronounced abstraction in the creative expressions of participants, distinguishing our study among others, as it underscores the importance of abstraction as an artistic means of self-expression. Therefore, our study complements previous works by emphasizing the positive influence of technology on the creative process and highlighting its role in the development of abstract art.

Conclusion

The results of the statistical analysis, conducted by comparing the t-statistic and critical t-value, indicate the presence of a statistically significant difference between the groups. The t-statistic value, which is 4.971, exceeds the critical t-value (1.98) at a significance level of 0.05. This suggests that the experimental group, which utilized graphic tablets and drawing programs, exhibited statistically higher creative outcomes compared to the control group using traditional art materials. Considering students' adaptation difficulties to new programs and equipment, it is noteworthy that the majority of students positively evaluate the opportunities presented by these technologies. The high percentage of positive feedback regarding the impact of technology on the interest in abstract art indicates its ability to stimulate interest and broaden expressive possibilities for participants. Specifically, 73% of students highlighted adaptation difficulties to new programs and equipment when using modern technologies, emphasizing the need for time and additional training. Against this backdrop, it is essential to note that 86% of students positively assess the opportunities provided by these technologies, emphasizing their ability to enhance creativity and expand expressive possibilities. It is observed that 65% of students express a desire to continue using modern technologies, reflecting a diversity of opinions regarding the duration and significance of these tools in the creative process. The high percentage, namely 88%, of

positive reviews regarding the impact of technology on the interest in abstract art underscores its ability to view abstraction from a new perspective and open up new possibilities for expression.

Prospects for further research in the field of abstraction in traditional Kazakh art encompass not only a profound analysis of traditional styles but also an understanding of how abstraction in art is perceived in the context of using modern technologies compared to traditional methods. This will allow for a more detailed exploration of the nuances of the creative process and the perception of abstract art in an era of technological changes. Subsequent research may also involve analyzing the impact of training and adaptation to modern technologies on the performance and creativity of participants in traditional Kazakh art. An important aspect of research is also the examination of the perception of abstract art by different user groups, shedding light on the cultural and social aspects of this art form. This research direction will provide an opportunity for a deeper understanding of the interaction between traditional Kazakh art and the challenges and opportunities presented by modern technologies, expanding knowledge of the perception of abstraction in this context.

Acknowledgements

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Problems of Contemporary Art in the Regions of Great Altai

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Abstract

The relevance of the study is due to the fact that at present the topic of modern art is studied all over the world. The purpose of study is the complex study of factors that influence the activities of young artists in the art sector, their genre preference and the choice of unique forms to convey their own thoughts. To achieve this goal, theoretical and empirical methods such as statistical analysis, synthesis, induction and deduction were mainly used. The result of the research was a full analysis of the works of modern Kazakh, Mongolian, Chinese and Uzbek artists working in such forms of postmodernism as performance, video art, street art, graffiti, and photography. The main conclusion is that modern art in Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Uzbekistan reflects syncretism, blending traditional nomadic customs, legends, and culture with modern interpretations and technological advancements. The applied value of this work lies in the identification of actual problems of contemporary art of the regions of Great Altai.

Keywords: *Syncretism, Art of Central Asia, Postmodernism, Performance, Neovanguard, Kazakhstan*

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Introduction

In the scientific literature, the issues of contemporary art in such states as Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the Republic of Kyrgyzstan are insufficiently studied. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, these countries began their own spiritual and cultural path of development, combining tradition and modernity. Therefore, the initial challenges and problems they raised in their works were issues of lost national identity and heritage, rethinking the concept of self-identity, and criticising the old approaches of the Soviet regime towards history and culture. As a result of these experiments of modern artists, the main movement of art of Great Altai became syncretism (Kudaibergenova, 2017). Representatives of this movement are R. Halfin, G. Tryakin-Bukharov, E. V. Vorobyevy, E. Meldibekov, S. Maslov, K. Ibrahimov, the group "Kyzyl tractor" and others whose projects were characterised by the desire for self-expression (Lee, 2015). In this connection, in modern art in recent years there is a huge interest in the traditional culture and art of nomadic peoples of Central Asia.

The ethnocultural traditions of each people are rooted in an arsenal of archetypes and symbols of art, which are included in the process of formation of art schools, serving as a characteristic and a way to consider their national specificity (Vorobieva, 2017). To solve the problems posed by the artists, the Russian researcher identifies three areas of their work. The first is based on the concept of breaking old foundations and creating new forms from scratch, which represents a unique artistic response to the challenges of creating new art in both national and global contexts. The second is to identify the artist as a person. The third movement pertains to how artists respond to pressing societal issues (Truspekova, 2017). The argument for this thesis is the manifestation of such themes in the works of informal artistic movements. An example of such manifestations was the active work of V. Ibryaeva, Y. Sorokina and activists in the Contemporary Arts Centre organised by the Soros Foundation, who were able to define the strategy and tactics of further transformations and to unite the joint efforts of the Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek artists (Central Asian…, 2022). Art, as the language of international communication and the universal means of self-understanding, comes to the aid of attempts to define one's own national identity, and questions of self-identification have defined the basic range of artistic searches of artists of modern art.

Within the framework of this thesis, one important problem of modern art of Great Altai is the lack of space for exhibitions. The activities carried out by informal organisations are intermittent, and modern artists cannot carry out their projects. Therefore, it is due to active participation in public art and public festivals or through participation in international art fairs and biennales (Reznikova, 2019). The relevance of the topic of this article is due to the fact that today, the modern art of Central Asia expresses the genesis of a variety of personal and social problems faced daily not only by residents of the regions of these states but also the world community as a whole. Analysis of data of Russian, American and Kazakh scientists shows that modern art is primarily the expression of opinion, which is expressed in various forms and modern solutions such as performance, video art, photography and graffiti. The works of the artists P. Kas, Z. Uyanga, B. Chogsom and others (Shishin et al., 2017) confirm this thesis. The novelty of the work lies in the complex study of the approaches of various authors to this issue. The topic of the study is considered from the position of Russian, Kazakh and other authors of modern science. The main elements of scientific originality are in-depth research of synthetic works of famous and young artists

of Central Asia, who are followers of the abstract composition, located in such countries as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Mongolia, and Kyrgyzstan.

Materials and Methods

The main methodological tool of this research was an integrated approach to the phenomena identified in the topic of work. The main general scientific methods of knowledge in the analysis of information were empirical and theoretical methods. The fundamental method of the study should be system analysis, which resulted in the study of works by well-known artists from the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the Republic of Kyrgyzstan. The real theoretical basis of the work was the articles and works of Kazakh, English, and Chinese authors such as Mushnikova (2020), Reznikova (2019), Shishin (2013), Kurbeloova (2017), and others. The study was carried out in several stages.

During the first stage of the study, theoretical methods such as analysis, synthesis, concretisation, and generalisation were used. The work mainly involved methods of system analysis of data from both Kazakh and Russian studies. An integrated approach to the study of the material was applied. The logic of the construction of this study lies in the consideration of the modern art of Great Altai from the position of the genre typology of this phenomenon. On this basis, the thesis posits that the predominant trend among modern artists in Central Asia involves syncretism and synthetic forms. The comprehensive approach makes it possible to state the exceptional applied nature of this study.

In the second stage of the study, the problem issues of social, cultural and political life, which are covered by modern artists with the help of such forms of self-expression as street art, photography and the genesis of computer technologies, were studied in more detail. In view of the use of the synthesis method, movements of issues affecting modern authors were analysed. With the help of the induction method, problematic aspects such as the search for self-identification, the role of the state in cultural life, and traditional appearances in modern. The theoretical basis of the second stage of the study was the work of Kudaibergenova (2017) and Myrzabekov et al. (2014).

The use of deduction methods in the work resulted in the derivation of hypothesis sequences, as well as the evaluation of test results. With the help of a synthesis, specific works of authors of postmodernist followers using abstract concepts in their works were considered. Within the framework of this study, the main areas of activity of artists in the genre of syncretism were established, and common features of interaction of models of such states were established: the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the Republic of Kyrgyzstan. At the third stage, the work of systematic analysis of data was completed, theoretical and practical conclusions were refined, and the results were generalised and systematised during the use of a comprehensive approach to the study of the topic. Within the framework of this methodology, many studies were considered, devoted to the history of the formation of modern art of the Great Altai countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the peculiarities of their formation using elements of syncretism.

This article critically researches and evaluates the expressions of contemporary authors of Great Altai discussion issues through the creation of their own works and performances. In

this artistic debate, contemporary artists can challenge and direct public debate to many alternative views, except one dominant discourse emanating from a regime or state.The study focuses on some of the most famous contemporary artists in Central Asia who have used their understanding of creative expression. Thus, with the help of methods of scientific analysis, the ways of solving the difficulties of contemporary artists of Central Asia were highlighted.

Results

Typology of the Contemporary Art Genre of Central Asia and Great Altai

To consider the issues of modern understanding of the problems in the art of the Great Altai Region, it is necessary to begin to consider the features of the direction of ways of understanding and reflecting the reality of the region. The term "Great Altai" is a macro-region at the junction of the borders of Russia, Kazakhstan, China and Mongolia, where the foundations of the Turko-Mongolian civilisation were laid. The study of the art of this region combines the cultural and ethnic features of the Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Mongolian peoples. It is aimed at identifying common world-view constants, spiritual attitudes, similarities, and imaginative and symbolic language of the peoples of Central Asia, with an undeniable bright distinctiveness of national traditions, content, images, forms, and methods of artistic creativity (Ministry of Science…, 2021). The modern art of Central Asia is mainly observed in the manifestation of the 2nd movements, which are an artistic response to many political, social and social factors: cube-futurism and neovanguard.

The choice of such forms of art determined the informal artistic movements that appeared in the art of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the early 1990s. In Almaty, the catalyst of all events related to the process of formation of modern art in Kazakhstan was the active work of V. Ibryaeva, Y. Soros and activists in the Contemporary Arts Centre organised by the Soros Foundation. Those who were able to define the strategy and tactics of further transformations unite in a single direction the joint efforts of Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek artists (Central Asian…, 2022). Genres in the world of modern art enough to understand the most relevant areas in the regions of Great Altai and Central Asia. It is therefore necessary to analyse the cultural, ethical and social aspects of artistic activity in specific states. However, it should be remembered that the group of subjects under consideration includes the countries that gained independence after the dissolution of the USSR, which gives reason to believe that the formation and development of art took place within the framework of the Russian cultural phenomenon (Roy & Roy, 2022).

Artworks raise important issues of self-identification, globalisation, and unification, which is expressed in syncretism. Representatives of this current are R. Halfin, G. Tryakin-Bukharov, E. V. Vorobyevy, E. Meldibekov, S. Maslov, K. Ibrahimov, the group "Kyzyl tractor" and others, whose projects differed in "intellectualism, non-standard decisions, radicality of gestures and a strong desire for self-expression" (Lee, 2015). In the modern world, artists have a huge arsenal of different ways of conveying information to the viewer through video, photography, text, etc., which simultaneously affects all the senses of the viewer: sight, hearing, memories, knowledge or lack thereof. An example of such interaction of visual forms of fine art with classical music is the work of the Kazakh master A. Atabekov, based within the movement of video art. Another author, E. Meldibekov, chose the movement of modern performance, reflecting the Eastern collective unconscious both in the past and in the present (Reznikova, 2019).

The example of comprehension of local, Kazakhstani classics is a series of works by K. Ibra-himov and M. Narymbetov, "Aigolek. Requiem on a dream" (Central Asian..., 2022). Under-standing the problems of identity, modern art does not leave out of consideration socially important issues. So, the movement that takes a separate position in art is street art. The striking representative of this movement in Kazakhstan is P. Kas and his work "Plyashem," expressing nude figures dressed by the artist in snow-white office shirts, contrasting with black smoke, hanging pipe. (Shevtsova, 2016; Reznikova, 2019).

The synthetic nature of contemporary art is observed not only among artists in Kazakh-stan but also in Mongolia. The most striking features of Mongolian art are revealed in the works of graphic artist Z. Uyanga, B. Chogs and his synthetic works, where the central place is the colour and rhythm that ties it to Mongolian ornamental art. Abstraction and mod-ernism are inherent in the works of such an artist as H. Sodnomzeren, whose abstract com-positions are clearly structured and have similarities with the sign (Shishin et al., 2017). It is necessary to note another interesting trend in modern art, which is aimed at more views that are liberal and positions of artists, namely informal venues and exhibitions (Aspan Gallery, 2022). The largest number of such formats is in Central Asia, locating Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The state apparatus of Kyrgyzstan does not support or finance the activi-ties of artists at such exhibitions, unlike in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, where they try to form "official" contemporary art. Simultaneously, international foundations such as the So-ros Foundation and the Swiss Embassy are actively supporting private initiatives in the arts and cultural sector in Bishkek. In Bishkek today, famous artists from Kyrgyzstan presented the exhibition "Winter Mood," which opened in "Gallery M." The exhibition "Winter mood" presents the works of such artists as A. Kamensky, A. Abdykhasimov, N. Kopelovich and many others (Mosolova & Omuraliev, 2018).

Syncretic tendencies in contemporary art are evident in China and Uzbekistan. The exhibi-tion Ink Art vs Ink Art (Expo 2010, Shanghai) vividly illustrated the fusion of tradition and modernity, notably through the animated work Scroll, which merged traditional ink aes-thetics with digital media. Modernist Chinese art, influenced by the US during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, spurred experimental national styles (Zhang, 2014). In Uzbekistan, V. Akhunov stands out as a key conceptual artist bridging Soviet and post-Soviet noncon-formist art. His practice spans text, video, performance, and ready-made objects. Since the 1990s, Akhunov's avant-garde literary and linguistic experiments such as Pum, Foundling, and Uzbek Transit have defined his conceptual output, later returning to visual formats in the 2000s (Sabirova, 2019). Thus, in the Great Altai and Central Asia, countries shaped by the Soviet legacy share artistic features such as syncretism and a blend of traditional art forms music, painting, ornament with new media, including video and digital art. Artists focus on national identity through abstraction, street art, and performance.

Contemporary Problems of Art in Central Asia
he main themes of contemporary art in Great Altai and Central Asia are the following questions for reflection: the creative search for historical roots, ethnocultural identity, and intercultural dialogue at the regional and global levels. The ethnocultural traditions of each people are rooted in an arsenal of archetypes and symbols of art, which are included in the process of formation of art schools, serving as a characteristic and a way of considering their national specificity. The scientific and educational problem in this field arises because

the methodology of science has not yet developed an objective definition of ethnocultural tradition as a subject of art research; as a result, approaches to the study of this phenomenon in the history of art are also ambiguous (Vorobieva, 2017).

Contemporary art in Central Asia is a reflection of the challenges faced by each society and an attempt at dialogue on these issues: Who are we? Where are we going? Is the transition period over? How will we protect the rights of our people? For many artists, "contemporary art" means being exempt from state control and state funding after the collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as being free from censorship and totalitarian production. In modern art there are different forms, expressions and themes, and each artist seeks to find the focus of his work. Some challenge conservative gender perceptions and models, while others explore the archives in search of something "authentic," "present," and undesirable. According to the intersection of the problem areas, the artist tries to overcome public apathy and negativism with the help of mobile initiatives. There are performance, actionism, radical gesture, joining together with artistic practices, criticism of state institutions, political criticism by means of such forms as performance, actionism, video art, connection to activist movements, the practice of socialisation of art, entering public space, overcoming museum lethargy from object to behaviour, and intervention (Central Asian..., 2022). Contemporary art has two diametrically opposite tendencies:

1. Syncretism between traditional and modern
2. Modern nihilism of traditional

This conflict of opposites will always be present in the art of any period. Another relevant topic of contemporary art research is the viewer's comprehension. The World Art of the XX Century led the avant-garde artist away from the rear bourgeois spectator, justifying the creator's rights to the known comprehension and comprehension and recognising the consumer's inherent incompetence, backwardness, and inability to be at the height of the artist. So, there was a split on elite art and kitsch. The first began to appeal to the opinion of experts; the second — to the inhabitant. Elite art was intended for people "with taste" (after all, the specificity of the actual is that at the time of its appearance, it is beyond the existing representations, including taste and aesthetics) (Faibisovich, 1997).

The question of artists' expression of power and representation is also an issue of artistic debate. The coverage of this issue is an attempt to investigate and conceptualise it. For the expression and self-realisation of artists, a problematic issue is the location of the exposition of works (Sun, 2022). In Central Asia, state institutions do not institutionalise exhibitions, spaces, etc. Another important issue is state-sponsored artists who put the execution of the order above their own speech and problematisation. Many modern artists participate in major "official" exhibitions; they are invited to state museums, which, on the one hand, gives unconditional development to the artist, and on the other, gives a certain impression of censorship, including the artist's own fears and self-censorship, and it has a very negative impact on the final product (Central Asian..., 2022).

Thus, modern art in Central Asia provides an extensive platform for seeking answers to the perennial questions of self-knowledge, statehood, and life. This research topic focusses on three main areas of discussion: the lack of financial support from state bodies, issues of art

elitism, and censorship challenges. However, it should be noted that in order to solve these problems, first of all, it is necessary to make appropriate changes:

1. Distribute open and free spaces for the exhibition of modern artists, by placing in perpetual use of public spaces: old factories, courtyards of closed buildings, etc. This fact will help in bringing to more people the cultural fund of the country.
2. Introduce exchange programs between artists of Central Asia and countries of Western Europe, USA.
3. Introduce grants and creative contests to bring together artists.

The analysis of contemporary art in the Great Altai and Central Asia reveals several key trends that reflect the region's cultural and historical complexity. Syncretism emerges as a defining feature manifested in the fusion of traditional aesthetics with modern technologies and media, bridging music, ornament, performance, and video art. This integrative approach is not only a stylistic choice but a reflection of deeper civilizational continuities across post-Soviet societies. The post-Soviet search for national identity plays a central role, with artists addressing themes of historical memory, ethnic roots, and cultural resilience amid globalization. Informal artistic movements, often supported by international foundations rather than state institutions, have provided crucial platforms for experimentation, self-expression, and political critique. Together, these elements shape a dynamic and diverse artistic landscape, where the negotiation between tradition and modernity becomes a means of both cultural survival and innovation.

Discussion

Syncretism and Heritage of Central Asian Nomads in Contemporary Art

The countries of Central Asia have a long history of cultural and humanitarian cooperation. The civilised and cultural interaction and influence of the peoples of Central Asia were not interrupted during the emergence of many independent states, which led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The diverse cooperation of the Central Asian countries at the present stage can be assessed positively. It is based on the ethnic, linguistic and cultural similarities of the peoples of Central Asia. In this connection, in modern art in recent years there is a huge interest in the traditional culture and art of nomadic peoples of Central Asia. This thesis is based on the fact that in the culture of nomadic peoples the proximity of nature and man is of particular importance, which is expressed in the system of traditional worldview, called tengrism or Tengrianism. It is Tengrianism, which gives a more or less systematic idea of the nomadic world model and allows treating in a special way such a cultural phenomenon as syncretism.

The connection between Tengrianism and contemporary art in Central Asia is reflected in the fusion of traditional spiritual elements with modern artistic practices. In Kazakhstan, artists like A. Akhmediyarova and A. Menlibayeva incorporate symbols of Kazakh mythology and Tengrianism into their experimental works, blending traditional themes with modern forms like video art and installation. V. Akhunov in Uzbekistan uses conceptual art to explore the intersection of Tengrian cosmology and post-Soviet identity, merging ancient beliefs with avant-garde expression. In Mongolia, artists such as Z. Uyanga and B. Chogs integrate Mongolian ornamental art with abstraction, reflecting the Tengrian worldview of harmony between humans and nature (Shishin et al., 2017). These contemporary artists

employ syncretism as a means to connect national identity, spiritual heritage, and social issues, bridging the past and present. By blending traditional and modern elements, they assert their cultural identity, offering a unique perspective that resonates both locally and globally.

The history of world art since the end of the XIX century has seen an active confrontation between classical art and its experimental forms. These forms are manifested in avant-garde, modernism, postmodernism, the concept of which is based on the denial of the basics of academic art and realism with their aspiration to mimesis and life likeness (Reznikova, 2019). Modern art is the result of postwar Western modernity, which includes creative movements and methods related to the art of modernism in general and its individual varieties, that is, relied on the achievements of the avant-garde currents of the early 20th century of the Second Century, in particular cubism and futurism (Central Asian..., 2022).

In the contemporary art of Central Asia, cultural cooperation between the states of the region is actively implemented through a number of interstate and transcultural projects that reflect both a common historical and cultural heritage and a desire for contemporary dialogue. One example is the Central Asian Biennale of Contemporary Art (Central Asian Pavilion), which is regularly held as part of the Venice Biennale. Since 2005, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan have jointly presented their artists in this prestigious international space, focusing on the themes of identity, postcolonialism, and rethinking the nomadic heritage (Biennale Arte 2024..., 2024).

Another important example is the ArtEast platform in Bishkek, which brings together artists from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and other countries in the region. It has become a center for the development of informal contemporary art, where exhibitions, art residencies, and interdisciplinary projects are organized. For example, in 2019, as part of the ArtEast program, the Transnomadica project was implemented, in which artists from different Central Asian countries created installations based on a common theme, "memory migration" (Residencies for artists and curators..., n.d.) In Uzbekistan, in cooperation with foreign curators, an ambitious project was implemented - the opening of the Center for Contemporary Art in Tashkent with the support of the Fund for the Development of Culture and Art under the Ministry of Culture. The center has become a platform for integrating Uzbek contemporary art into the regional and global context, in particular by holding interregional exhibitions with artists from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan (Fine and Applied..., 2024).

Researchers emphasize the integral, undivided nature of nomadic life, where economic, cognitive, social, religious, and artistic spheres are closely interconnected. This is evident in the Kazakh traditional art form ortheke, which reflects syncretism and the central role of animal imagery in nomadic art (Akataev, 1994). Syncretism, as a hallmark of nomadic culture, signifies the unity of material and spiritual life. It merges the rational and emotional, the real and mythological, as seen in rituals that connect daily practices with mythology, ideology, and social cohesion (Mukhambetova, 2002). The core of the original culture is the world view, the historical character of which is expressed in its main forms. There is mythology, religion, philosophy. In this connection, we show the cosmogonical and mythological representations of nomads. For the modern peoples of Central Asia, nomadic culture

is an integrating factor. The characteristic features of nomadic "picture of the world" is syncretism, unity with nature, perception of the integrity of the world. The earliest archaic strata of worldviews are ancient cults, myths, and religions.

Despite the dynamic development of contemporary art in Central Asia, artists continue to face a range of challenges rooted in both global and local contexts. One of the key tensions lies in the ambivalent perception of syncretism and traditional influences. While these elements enrich artistic expression by connecting creators with their cultural heritage particularly through motifs of nomadic philosophy, Tengrianism, and mythopoetic thought they can also constrain the reception of such art on the global stage. In international discourse, works grounded in ethnocultural codes are often viewed through an orientalist lens, which exoticizes rather than fully integrates them into broader narratives of contemporary art. Artists encounter institutional inertia and the lack of robust state support, resulting in limited access to professional platforms and exposure. Informal artistic initiatives offer some autonomy but are often unsustainable and fragmented. The legacy of the post-Soviet transition continues to influence the artistic field, where the search for identity frequently clashes with imposed standards of modernism and market-driven aesthetics. In this complex environment, syncretism functions not only as a creative strategy but also as a critical tool for negotiating visibility, authenticity, and artistic autonomy yet it remains vulnerable to both cultural marginalization and ideological instrumentalization.

Nomads developed known forms of religion: animism, fetishism, totemism, zoolatry, magic. Nomads have mastered the world at the level of myth-like thinking, the peculiarity of which is the emotional experience of the world. The content of nomadic thinking distinguishes such essential characteristics as imagery, mythology, poetry, syncretism; archaic thinking was aimed at the harmonious coexistence of man and nature. The problem of preserving the cultural heritage of Kazakhstan is being actualized. In this regard, the cultural dominants of medieval Kazakhstan acquire special interest: Islam as a type of culture, cities and archaeological cultures, architecture of medieval Kazakhstan (Zolotareva, 2010).

Contemporary Art of the Great Altai: Identity and Cultural Codes
The actual problems of contemporary art influenced by the Great Altai are revealed in specific states of the region. For example, Kazakh artists have identified for themselves the movement of "deconstruction" – they have successfully integrated into the stream of "collapse" of the old world order, stereotypes of consciousness, debunking at every step and new and old myths. The first thing that was revealed – and it was in actual art that the most prominently came out – is the search for an answer to the question of its place in the scale of the post-Soviet and then the world art. The second movement is the artists' identification of themselves by regional and national characteristics, that is, the development of the theme of ethnic nature and topography of the place as the basis of the shaping structure, which is self-worth and, of course, worthy of world recognition. The third movement of creative searches is reaction to a particular moment of time. It is a kind of critical perspective of coverage of all events through the prism of understanding "genetic syndromes," archetypes of consciousness (Truspekova, 2017).

Therefore, a common theme in these movements is the "national accent" and the incorporation of ethnocultural codes into art. For more detailed coverage of this topic, let us give a study of the Russian scientist regarding the modern art of Great Altai. The Russian

scientists conducted their research from 2013 to 2015. The scientists made a comparative analysis of the basic categories of Mongolian and Russian art, reflected in the linguistic picture of the world of the two peoples. The project conducted three expeditions to Mongolia (Ulaanbaatar and Hovda) to explore art collections, libraries, and art workshops. During the implementation of the project, the main stylistic movements, similarities and differences of Mongolian and Siberian art were identified and highlighted: the trend towards the manifestation of polytheism and realistic movement in art; the appearance of the features of such a stylistic movement as "harsh style"; the development of the Mongol-zurag style in Mongolian art; and in Russian art – Buryat-zurag (Mushnikova, 2020). The project participants analysed the stylistic movement of "metahistorical expressionism" and highlighted the basic features of this style in the creativity of Mongolian and Siberian artists. The scientists also developed the author's methodological approach in the interpretation of works of art on the basis of the philosophical concept of "arga-bilig" and modern methods of art science – iconology and iconography, which were tested on a number of art monuments (Shinshi, 2013).

In Central Asia during the 1990s, modern art flourished, gathering and accumulating in the regions of this sector a huge number of freedom-thinking and creative authors. The culture of the new republics developed within the boundaries of free thinking, and the artists raised the problems of identity, history, and national perspectives of the state. As a result of the fact that the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Kyrgyzstan have a historical aspect of the nomadic people, modern writers try to beat and conceptualise this fact by displaying problems through symbols, images and abstraction. Therefore, many well-known artists follow the path of merging unusual forms, including the movement of avant-garde, where young artists are allowed to go on an experiment. However, these experimental movements are not supported by the government, which is enough to frame this movement in modern art.

Many artists and art critics have addressed this issue in the scientific literature. For example, the Kazakh art historian D.T. Kudaibergenova (2017) spoke about the art and culture of Kazakhstan as follows: "Despite the vibrant civic culture that many artists are creating in Almaty, Bishkek, Tashkent, Dushanbe and Astana, they still lack an institutional network of communication or even a museum of modern art where many of their works can be collected and exhibited." One of these spaces has become a modern museum, created and operating in the Republic of Kazakhstan at the moment. Modern artists were able to realise their large-scale projects in this space, leading to the genesis of traditional art and new forms of self-expression. Among them are exhibitions by A. Akhmediyarova (Unique number), A. Menlibayeva, S. Bekbotaev and A. Sadenova (Karlag Archipelago), and E. V. Vorobyev, S. Dusenbina, R. Nurekeeva, Y. Sorokina and S. Narova (Future). Heritage), as well as several works of other modern Kazakh artists on the first floor of the museum. However, these exhibitions are not permanent, and contemporary artists in other regions must find their place and space in local cultural institutions. They do this either through active participation in public art and public festivals (ArtBat Fest in Almaty and other events) or through participation in international art fairs and biennales (Kudaibergenova, 2017).

American contemporary art scholars note that syncretism is not a true embodiment of contemporary art. In the 1980s, many American critics argued that the best modern art had radically broken from the past. They believed that what they called postmodernist

culture fundamentally changed the way people communicate and experience everyday life. After this decision to break with the past, as they argued that only completely new forms of art can be elitist. Postmodernist artists believed that the best new art was better than the old traditions. Postmodernism was not only what came after modernism but a whole new sensibility (Carrier, 2010). Thus, the considered examples show that modern art appeals to the most acute problems of modern society, both at the level of the individual and the whole society. Such an approach is a characteristic of "contemporary art," which does not think of itself today outside politics, economy, and society. The mutual influence of East and West, postmodernist quoting, and the dialogue of antiquity and modernity interest representatives of Kazakhstan contemporary art. Above were given examples of how artists of contemporary art turn to hidden or explicit quotes from world and Kazakh classics, viewing them through the prism of the national mentality that has developed to our days. Inclusion of outstanding samples of world art – music and visual – in the field of one's own art statements, being a significant topic in modern art of Kazakhstan and Central Asia, allows one to consider interaction of classics and avant-garde as a version of constructive dialogue (Reznikova, 2019).

So, for masters of Kazakhstan, the "inalienable" background of creativity is traditional culture. The given examples allow us to speak about the existence in the figurative fabric of works of fine art of a rich mythological and folklore material used and transformed in painting, graphics and sculpture (Sharipova, 2017). Thus, the topic of contemporary art in the regions of Great Altai and Central Asia is a very topical issue, which is devoted to many American, Kazakh and Russian studies. The peculiarity of this scientific discussion is the subject of art and culture. As noted earlier, such topics as self-identity search for oneself as an individual and author, appeal to the theme of cultural national epics, including legends, music, ornament tools, and so on, are a common category for each author and researcher in this topic.

Conclusions

This study aims at an expanded and comprehensive analysis of the understanding of this phenomenon in the culture of the 21st century as "modern art ." The research base was based on the genre search of the typology of contemporary art of such regions as Great Altai and Central Asia. On the basis of the data obtained, the following conclusions were reached. The fundamental genres of modern art are postmodernism and its types, such as cubism, abstraction, and neo-avant-garde. The modern art of Great Altai countries is aimed at the search for national identity, future development of the state as a whole, and individual experiences of the artist. First of all, it should be noted that the states of Central Asia are relatively young republics formed as a result of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, so a large cultural layer of Russian artists and art has given some directions to development. For the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, contemporary art is primarily the embodiment of syncretism and synthetic forms. The traditional way of nomadic people and the postmodern style made the artists of these states world famous. Combining new forms such as performance, street graffiti, video art and photography, the young generation forms in their works a combination of recognisable ornaments, traditional colours, and artistic legends, which results in a combination and genesis of new forms.

Secondly, the main challenges facing the contemporary art writer are identity, social and political issues. The statements of the authors of Greater Altai Region may be anti-state, resulting in severe censorship. Another area for discussion is the possibility of artists within the framework of unusual forms. Thus, today the most popular movement is informal organisations of artists, which, at their own expense, organise their exhibitions to avoid censorship and other pressure from state authorities. To improve the system of disclosure of young and modern artists of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Mongolia, the state should support and subsidise independent projects to promote the cultural stratum of its region and to promote this type of art among the younger generation. This improvement will solve another discussion problem: the question of the elitism of art. Modern artists will be able to educate the public free of charge and implement their large-scale projects in specially designated cultural and public places.

To improve the visibility and support of contemporary artists in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Mongolia, it is crucial for the state to provide financial backing and institutional support for independent projects. Expanding platforms like national art festivals, subsidizing independent galleries, and utilizing public spaces for exhibitions can foster creativity and free expression. By promoting such initiatives, governments can break barriers to censorship, engage younger generations, and make art more accessible, ultimately contributing to the sustainable development of contemporary art in Central Asia.

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Reimagining Public Art in Thailand: Policy, Practice and Sustainability

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Abstract

This research examines how governments promote public art through funding, mandate spaces and research support using international case studies. However, challenges such as centralized funding and restrictions on artistic expression persist. The study proposes a framework for "public art" within fine arts, emphasizing interdisciplinary collaboration and sustainable practices in Thailand. It underscores the importance of collaborative creativity, community engagement, and policy advocacy for a thriving public art landscape. Findings reveal the potential of public art to address societal challenges, foster social healing, and contribute to cultural preservation and economic development. Recommendations include promoting decentralized, community-led initiatives, establishing supportive policies, and fostering inter-ministerial collaboration. This research offers valuable insights for enhancing the role of public art in Thailand, particularly in addressing urgent social issues and promoting sustainable development.

Keywords: *Public Art, Government Policies, Sustainability, Community Engagement, Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Thailand*

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Introduction

The term "public art" encompasses a multitude of interpretations, with its meaning adaptable to the specific intentions and objectives of each project. A review of relevant literature reveals that public art can serve various functions, including showcasing community artistic and cultural values, enhancing the environment, transforming landscapes, and raising awareness, among others. These artworks are typically displayed in public spaces, emphasizing their accessibility to all. The process often involves collaboration between organizers, artists, the community, and various networks, all working towards a shared goal (Association for Public Art, 2020, cited in Chantrangsu, 2023).

In the context of this project, the researcher defines "public art" as the development of creative spaces for community arts and culture, coupled with the organization of learning activities related to community arts and culture. This approach aligns with the sustainable development goals (SDGs), specifically target 11.4, which aims to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. Furthermore, social integration is considered crucial, with careful consideration given to the appropriate timing and context for integration. The project also emphasizes a bottom-up approach, involving a non-hierarchical model of collaboration that originates from the grassroots level. This approach fosters cooperation among small groups with shared ideas and aligned goals, leading to concrete action. (Wattananarong, 2013)

Currently, the organization of public art events (as defined in certain contexts) is gaining momentum in Thai society, particularly in Bangkok and various provinces. However, data collection and past research indicate that the sustainability of such events remains limited, except in areas with supportive policies and continuous funding, both in cash and in kind. A notable example is "Chula Art Town," initiated by the Chulalongkorn University Property Management Office. Most current public art manifestations take the form of festivals, events, or activities, often lacking sustainability. A key concern is the inadequacy of efforts focused on conservation, preservation, and innovative reinterpretation of cultural heritage. This issue impacts the safeguarding of national cultural heritage and its effective dissemination and understanding among the wider public.

Based on past research encompassing various aspects of public art, including conservation, preservation, artistic creation, reinterpretation, exhibition, and audience engagement platforms, it is evident that the management systems for creative spaces vary across different areas, significantly influencing sustainability. Most initiatives are individual, network-based, or festival-oriented, relying on the cultural capital of artists (embodied state, knowledge, skills, and social capital). Sufficient social capital and diverse networks can lead to the establishment of sustainable supply chains for managing festivals and events.

Several countries have demonstrated successful models of government involvement in public art, ranging from policy formulation to implementation and addressing limitations. Case studies from France, the United States, Taiwan, and Sweden reveal that governments can effectively promote public art through legislation that directly supports artists' creative endeavors or mandates the inclusion of public art spaces in public construction projects. They can also foster public participation in the creation of public art, establish dedicated agencies to oversee and support public art initiatives, and provide research funding to generate knowledge that informs public art policies.

However, public art initiatives in many countries face challenges. These include central-ized funding mechanisms, non-inclusive artist selection processes, and cultural or politi-cal restrictions on artistic expression in public spaces. Despite these limitations, public art policies have yielded positive outcomes such as an increase in public artworks, the integra-tion of community-focused ideas into art and art-related activities, increased employment opportunities and professionalization for artists, and enhanced aesthetic appeal of public spaces. Public art also contributes to tourism promotion.

These examples raise the question of whether the Thai government could adopt similar policies to address social issues through public art. However, Thailand's structural limi-tations and political volatility pose challenges to policy continuity. To address this, the research project aims to identify suitable public art practices for Thailand, supported by funding from the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT) Program Management Unit for Human Resources & Institutional. Development, Research and Innovation (PMU-B). The goal is to develop recommendations for public art creation, particularly in urgent situations where art can contribute to national development, with a focus on the concept of public art.

Research Objectives
To investigate and propose a framework for "public art" within the field of Fine Arts that fosters interdisciplinary connections and drives sustainable public art initiatives in Thai-land, contributing to national development and addressing urgent social issues.

Research Questions:

1.   Conceptual Framework and Interdisciplinary Connections: How can 'Public art' in fine arts foster interdisciplinary collaborations to drive sustainable collaborations to drive sustainable initiatives for Thailand's national development.

2.   Driving Public Art and Artist Sustainability: What creative processes, knowledge, and methodologies can be generated to drive impactful public art initiatives and provide solutions for artistic production in Thailand? Additionally, what recommendations can be offered to enhance the professional survival and adaptation strategies of artists engaged in public art practices?

Research Methods
The researcher employed a qualitative research approach to explore ideas, information, and phenomena related to public art initiatives both in Thailand and internationally. This included examining artistic creations, relevant policies, and creative concepts.

Stage 1: Preparatory Stage
Literature Review: The researcher conducted a comprehensive review of literature and media resources to gather information on public art policies and artistic creations for the public, both in Thailand and internationally. This included identifying successful interven-tions and best practices related to art policies and social development.

Focus Group Discussions and In-depth Interviews:
- Seven experts in various fields related to the research topic were engaged in focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. These fields included cultural management, creative economy promotion, cultural space management, music, art & performance.

- A total of 16 artists from visual arts, performing arts, and music fields participated in focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The discussions explored their creative concepts, adaptation methods, frameworks, and approaches to interdisciplinary collaboration. Participants also shared case studies, artworks, recommendations, and views on public art exhibition spaces, collaboration with other sectors for sustainable development, project suggestions, and other relevant issues. The artists were categorized into performing arts (5 individuals), music (3 individuals), visual arts (2 individuals), and emerging artists (6 individuals).

This multi-faceted approach allowed for a rich and nuanced understanding of the current landscape of public art, both in Thailand and globally, and provided valuable insights to inform the development of a framework for sustainable public art initiatives in Thailand.

Stage 2: Analysis, Synthesis, and Reporting
- Expert Panel Discussion: A panel discussion was organized to facilitate the synthesis and extraction of lessons learned from the development of artworks and initiatives. The panel will comprise experts in cultural policy implementation, a representative from the Thai National Commission for UNESCO, a representative from the International Council of Traditional Music in Thailand, experts in city and regional planning, visual arts, along with urban design, and five stakeholders. The discussion will focus on the following key points:

  1. *Knowledge Exchange:* The panel will explore the knowledge generated from international perspectives on public art and the findings of this research (new framework). This will include an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) associated with the proposed framework, as well as strategies for its adaptation and application for public benefit in various contexts.
  2. *Lessons Learned:* The panel will analyze the lessons essential for the public art approach, focusing on new creative processes for driving public art initiatives within the arts dimension. This will include recommendations for artists regarding their mental well-being and professional survival, emphasizing the role of art in contributing to social well-being.

This stage aims to consolidate the findings from the previous stage and generate actionable insights through expert discussions. The outcomes will inform the development of recommendations for sustainable and impactful public art practices in Thailand.

Lessons and Models of Public Art Management Policies from Governments Abroad

A survey of public art management policies globally reveals the significant role of government policies in shaping public art creation. It represents a connection between art and architecture for the public benefit, integrating arts and culture into national policies for urban development. This concept has proliferated from Western democracies to Asia over the past half-century, starting in the 1950s, as detailed below.

Public and Private Sector Collaboration in Driving Public Art: The Case of France

France pioneered concrete policies for funding public art. In 1950, the government introduced the Percent for Art Provisions law, allocating a percentage of public construction budgets to fund public art projects. Government agencies initiated and promoted various

art-related activities in public spaces, encompassing any artwork found or created in these areas. The Percent for Art Provisions resulted in a proliferation of public artworks. However, it also drew criticism from French intellectuals and art experts, who traditionally value independent critique, regarding the centralized nature of the funding system.

The law was criticized for its centralized governance approach, with top-down strategic planning and government agencies as the primary initiators and drivers of activities. This changed in 1990 when the private "Foundation of France" collaborated with the government to launch the New Patrons Public Art Plan Les Nouveaux Commands in French. This program involves project proposals and funding for artistic creations. The government and large corporations are invited to establish organizations to receive donations. The implementation plan includes three groups participating in decision-making: patrons (individuals or legal entities), artists, and art experts who act as intermediaries between artists, patrons, and others involved in the creation or procurement of public art.

To date, the New Patrons Public Art Plan has supported over 500 public art projects installed in France and across Europe. This concept revolutionized art patronage through a democratic approach to project management. Simultaneously, it reflects the French government's shift towards empowering communities and local authorities with cultural interaction, decentralizing power, and promoting policy equality. Besides France, several other European countries have adopted similar policies, including Italy, Spain, Germany, and Switzerland, as well as countries on other continents like the USA and Chile (Apichitsakul, 2017: 18-21).

The case studies of France's Percent for Art Provisions in1950 and the New Patrons Public Art Plan in 1990 demonstrate successful models and positive lessons. They highlight the government's prioritization of public art through collaboration with the private sector. Government support, through funding for artists, has fostered the growth of public art. However, the centralized approach faced criticism. The involvement of private foundations in promoting public art policies helped mitigate this weakness by decentralizing operations and empowering local authorities and the private sector in a democratic manner, effectively returning control over public art projects and spaces to the community.

Mandating Public Art Installations in Government Construction Projects: The Case of the United States

The United States, following France's example, has implemented policies for public art management. Each state under the federal government has laws similar to France's Percent for Art Provisions in 1950. For instance, the state of Washington enacted the Percentage for Art law in 1959, overseen by the General Services Administration, responsible for drafting policies related to state properties. Data indicates that between 1962 and 1978, the government commissioned 145 artworks from artists. In 1962, several pieces were created to promote the World's Fair held that year. Subsequently, in 1976, the law in Washington mandated that half of all construction projects funded by the state budget must include public art installations. Besides Washington, several other states passed similar laws around the same time, such as Florida in 1974 and Oregon and Alaska in 1976. However, due to the republican system of government, the specifics of policy management vary across states.

For example, in 1982, New York City enacted New York's Percent for Art, which allocates a portion of the budget for construction projects exceeding ten million US dollars towards various art projects within the construction area (Apichitsakul, 2017: 21).

The US approach to public art policy demonstrates government support leading to the growth of public art through artist funding, similar to France. It also highlights the role of publicly funded art in world exhibitions and tourism promotion. Despite limitations regarding mandatory installations and artist selection processes for government construction projects, as well as variations in legal details, these policies align with the spirit of the republican constitution, where each state has its own laws enforced by local governments, resulting in diverse public art policies across states (Apichitsakul, 2017: 21). Nevertheless, this policy success has served as a model for other countries, such as Taiwan, which adopted similar legislation mandating public art installations in government construction projects, albeit with different proportions, as discussed in the next section.

1% Public Art Management Policy: The Case of Taiwan

In the Asian context, Taiwan stands out for its laws and policies related to public art and cultural promotion, influenced by Western practices. These include policies and laws that support and mandate the creation of art through government investment, while also encouraging private sector and public participation in creative endeavors. Taiwan is considered a pioneer in Asia for successfully implementing public art policies, facilitated by its democratic context and the government's push for economic and social development policies since the 1990s.

The Taiwanese government implemented the 1% public art policy through the Cultural and Art Reward Act in 1992 to ensure continuous support for public art. This law mandates that 1% of the total budget for all government construction projects be allocated for procuring and installing public art in public spaces. This policy has led to an increase in public art throughout Taiwan, especially in major cities like Taipei. The policy's connection to contemporary art in Taiwan is evident through four key characteristics that serve as a model for success:

1. Alignment with state art management regulations: Clear procedures for procuring or creating public art are established.
2. Openness to artists regardless of nationality: Both professional and amateur artists can participate, with four main methods for selecting artworks. The most popular method involves open competitions, emphasizing public participation (although artists may not have the same freedom for political critique in public art as in Western countries, reflecting distinct political cultures).
3. Community-oriented approach: Public art trends towards communitarianism, both in the form of artworks and artistic activities that support education and public participation.
4. Positive impact on the contemporary art scene: The policy has brought tangible positive changes to the broader contemporary art scene in Taiwan. It has achieved its goal of raising professional standards in the arts by supporting artists, art-related professions, academics, and art management experts. Additionally, it has enhanced the aesthetic appeal of public spaces through the resulting public artworks (Apichitsakul, 2017).

Generating Knowledge about Public Art: The Case of Sweden

Beyond mandatory funding policies and public participation, governments also play a role in supporting public art through research funding to generate knowledge. Sweden exemplifies this approach with its dedicated governmental agency, the Public Art Agency of Sweden, established in 1937 under the Ministry of Culture. The agency supports and oversees the installation of permanent artworks in public spaces, temporary exhibitions, museum collections, and aesthetic urban development. Its website states that its primary mission is to provide high-quality contemporary art for buildings used by the central government. The agency also supports public spaces not owned by the central government and provides information about public art to society. Moreover, the artworks supported and managed by the agency represent the current era, and contemporary art is viewed not only as permanent visual art but also encompasses human experiences, social interactions, and critical and creative practices in life, covering both mental and social public spaces. Currently, the agency receives an annual government budget of over 42.9 million Swedish Krona for producing public art, with an additional 31.8 million Krona for specific projects (Konstråd, 2023).

The emphasis on intangible public spaces (mental public spaces) by the Public Art Agency Sweden is evident through its funding of research on public art. This is reflected in annual reports on the current state of public art research in Nordic countries and the broader international context. For example, the "Public Art Research Report" (2018) by Kjell Caminha and Prof. Håkan Nilsson (2018) aims to identify the need for and opportunities to develop research programs that support public art paradigms, policies, and practices in Sweden.

The report by Caminha and Nilsson (2018: 59) indicates that knowledge about public art in Nordic countries and globally is rich and covers a wide range of disciplines, including history, art theory, urbanism, sociology, geography, architecture, economics, management, and cultural studies. It encompasses both academic research and research actions. The report suggests potential for developing public art research by promoting interdisciplinary references and fostering an interdisciplinary and international research culture that addresses public art topics. While actively working to maintain diversity in research approaches and priorities, public art research doesn't need to be a separate subfield but rather a vibrant interdisciplinary research area connected to other research questions. Current public art research appears to be in a developmental stage with the mapping of existing knowledge seemingly necessary.

This research investigates the role of government in promoting and supporting public art through case studies from various countries. It finds that governments play a crucial role in driving public art initiatives through a range of policies and laws, such as direct funding allocations, mandating public art spaces in government construction projects, and supporting research. However, challenges and limitations, including centralized power structures and restrictions on artistic freedom of expression, also exist. The research findings offer valuable insights for developing policies and practices to promote public art in Thailand, particularly within the context of sustainable development and community engagement.

Research Results

The research team proposes a novel creative process aimed at advancing public art initiatives. This process offers new knowledge and methodologies to facilitate artistic production. The key findings of this research can be summarized as follows: (1)Novel insights into interdisciplinary artistic collaboration for public art creation: This encompasses both procedural knowledge that can lead to creative output and the utilization of artistic processes to foster social learning. (2) Methodologies within social arts for addressing societal challenges: The research presents methodologies within the domain of social arts that can be employed as solutions or alternatives in response to diverse social crises, aligning with the objectives established by the Program Management Unit for Human Resources & Institutional Development, Research and Innovation (PMU-B). Furthermore, the project team intends to translate these findings into tangible outcomes. Building upon the knowledge acquired from previous projects, the team is prepared to develop concrete policy recommendations to further promote and support the field of public art.

While many countries have successfully implemented policies to promote sustainable public art, Thailand's efforts have been characterized by varying definitions and interpretations, leading to ambiguity and inconsistency. The volatile political climate further complicates reliance on top-down policies, making grassroots initiatives crucial for Thailand. Through our research and public policy forums, we aimed to find solutions and creative methods for public art. The following are key points drawn from our research project:

Research Findings and Policy Implications

The Public Art Project, funded by the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT) Program Management Unit for Human Resources & Institutional. Development, Research and Innovation (PMU-B), yielded two key findings:

(1) New knowledge on interdisciplinary artistic collaboration for Public Art Project: This includes both process-oriented knowledge leading to creative output and the utilization of artistic processes to foster social learning about health and illness, and promote social healing (social retreat), based on the belief that "arts can help us to heal and rebuild." However, the specific application of public art depends on the desired outcomes and dimensions.

(2) Recommendations for developing creative approaches to public art: These recommendations offer solutions or alternatives for creative work in the arts and creative industries. Beyond economic considerations (value), they emphasize the role of culture and artists in driving social change and addressing societal issues (values). This is contingent upon the supply chain: the production and dissemination of creative works are crucial.

These research findings align with the diverse purposes of public art identified in the literature review. Public art can serve transformative or revitalizing purposes, such as improving a city's image to attract tourists and investment. It can also support community or city activities, becoming a key factor in competing with other cities internationally (Ashworth and Voogt, 1990; Avraham, 2004). Moreover, public art fosters a sense of community (creating shared memories, researcher's note), awareness of local identity, social network develop-

ment, education, and social change (Hall and Robertson, 2001). It promotes cultural diversity and encourages the inclusion of marginalized groups, particularly by providing them with opportunities to participate in the artistic production process (Hall and Smith, 2005). Public art can also signal and support local demands for reform, revitalization, and innovative approaches to space (Wansborough and Mageean, 2000).

Approach to Designing Creative Spaces for Learning and Current Challenges

Thailand possesses the potential and financial resources to organize exhibitions or invest in creative artworks to beautify its cities, as evidenced by the government's ability to effectively mobilize large crowds in coordinated displays during significant festivals. However, a crucial question arises: Is it feasible for the government or funding sources to prioritize arts and culture embedded in people's everyday lives, rather than solely focusing on grand events? Additionally, are these everyday expressions recognized as art, and can they contribute to addressing community challenges? Assistant Professor Dr. Pitch Pongswasdi, during a project debriefing session, suggested that these questions should inform the policy recommendations of future public art projects (Pongswasdi, 2023). Furthermore, when formulating policies or recommendations, researchers must avoid a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead of "cutting the foot to fit the shoe," they should "cut the shoe to fit the foot." In other words, policies should be rooted in the needs and issues of the local community, following a bottom-up approach. Public art creations should draw inspiration from existing cultural elements and undergo critical analysis for further development, adopting a constructive criticism approach. This process should question why certain aspects of everyday life are overlooked by the government and explore the reasons behind the disappearance of certain cultural traditions. Moreover, such projects should facilitate a learning process within the community.

Conservation, Preservation, Creation, and Utilization of Arts and Culture for Public Benefit and Expanding Management from Local to Global Levels

The selection of local arts and culture for learning activities, encompassing both artistic performance skills and language for cultural communication, is crucial for the future of children and youth in the area. In organizing the public art project for this research, the concept of "preserve, deconstruct, create" was utilized as a guideline for managing cultural capital within the area, aiming to further develop cultural and artistic works.

Preservation (conservation): This involves selecting traditional forms of performances existing in the area and showcasing them to conserve and perpetuate the community's valuable cultural heritage.

Deconstruction: This step entails taking existing performances and modifying them by deconstructing the core elements of the performance. These are then creatively infused with contemporary ideas and relevant issues, using traditional art forms as a tool to communicate with the younger generation.

Creation: This involves integrating various branches of the arts—such as visual arts, music, and performance—to create comprehensive and contemporary art pieces that can effectively communicate in today's world (Boonserm, Saibunmi and Changransu, 2024).

Network-Based Public Management for Sustainable Development (Policy Networks and Sustainability)

In pursuing policy-driven social initiatives, the working group emphasizes the concept of network-based public management for sustainable development. Currently, public art initiatives can range from individual to community levels, but they often lack flexibility and may not be implemented without a supportive supply chain. Addressing the scarcity of resources and management authority in public affairs through collaboration with government agencies, the private sector, and civil society in the form of policy networks is an evolving approach to mitigate various challenges related to efficiency, effectiveness, and democracy in public administration. This approach aligns with the new public management (NPM) concept, which has been continuously challenged by critics (Provan and Milward, 2001).

Furthermore, network-based public management emphasizes defining and analyzing the context for collaborative public decision-making. This focuses on studying the types of networks, power structures, and decision-making processes of key network members. Public administration in the form of policy networks involves collaboration with diverse structural relationships, comprising key actors such as government organizations, private sector organizations, and non-profit organizations (Stokman, 2014). Contemporary public administration necessitates a network-based approach rather than relying solely on individual agencies. Networks consist of multiple organizations with interdependent structures, connected through authority bonds, exchange relations, and common-interest-based coalitions (O'Toole,1997).

Examining the application of policy network theory in Thai public administration reveals that many government officials and academics are interested in the outcomes of network-based management. The primary objective of establishing collaborative efforts is to seek opportunities to improve government agency performance or find ways to enhance efficiency and reduce operational costs. Network-based approaches can contribute to increased capacity and capabilities in implementing public policies. However, it's worth noting that most existing networks focus on natural resource conservation, environmental management, social welfare, economic infrastructure, and public services, rather than promoting education and culture (Krueathep, Riccucci, and Charas, 2010).
Therefore, understanding the interactions of actors and public decision-making influenced by various institutions within complex multi-level governance systems, involving collaboration between local, regional, national, and international entities, is crucial for sustainable development (Lubell, 2015).

In conclusion, policy network theory emphasizes seeking collaboration for public affairs management through networks involving government, private sector, and civil society, utilizing diverse models. The shared objective is to mitigate resource allocation limitations and establish legitimacy in policy decisions, promoting democratic values under good governance principles in public administration to achieve sustainable development goals.

The synthesis of the Public Art Project's work reveals both positive aspects and areas for caution in various dimensions, providing valuable lessons for the working group and insights for future initiatives. The role of the government in supporting public art creation,

and the subsequent impact, including an increase in the number of artworks, employment opportunities for professional artists, and the generation of knowledge that further informs government policies, can be summarized into a comprehensive model of success.

Policy Characteristics:
Several examples illustrate the nature of successful policies:
1. Direct Funding Support: Governments enact policies to promote public art through legislation that directly supports artists' creative endeavors, such as France's Percent for Art Provisions."
2. Mandated Public Art Spaces: Governments mandate the inclusion of public art spaces in public construction projects, beyond direct funding support. For instance, Taiwan's Cultural and Art Reward Act requires a percentage of the total cost of any government construction project to be allocated for procuring and installing public art within the project area or building. Similarly, New York City's Percent for Art law allocates a portion of the budget for construction projects exceeding ten million US dollars towards various art projects within the construction area.
3. Public Participation: Governments actively encourage public participation in the creation of public art. Examples include the New Patrons public art plan in France, a collaboration between the government and private foundations, and Taiwan's practice of holding competitions to select artists for government projects, reflecting a focus on public engagement.
4. Dedicated Agencies: Governments establish dedicated agencies to oversee, promote, and support the creation of public art. Sweden's Public Art Agency of Sweden exemplifies this approach.
5. Research Funding: Governments provide research funding to generate knowledge about public art, informing policy development. Sweden's annual report surveying the state of research related to public art serves as an example.

Policy Pitfalls and Lessons Learned:
However, there are also pitfalls and drawbacks from which we can learn:
1. Centralized Funding: France's legislation exhibits a centralized funding mechanism that may limit accessibility and flexibility.
2. Non-inclusive Artist Selection: Some government processes for selecting artists lack transparency and public participation, raising concerns about fairness.
3. Restrictions on Artistic Expression: Certain cultural and political contexts, such as in Taiwan, may impose restrictions on artists' freedom of expression in public spaces, differing from Western practices.

These international examples offer valuable lessons for Thailand in developing effective and sustainable public art policies, highlighting the importance of balancing government support with community engagement and artistic freedom.

Feasibility of Adapting Successful International Models to Generate Knowledge for Policy Recommendations

The article "Public Art: The State of the Capital City" by Ark Fongsamut (2008) offers valuable insights, revealing previous attempts to promote public art policies during democratic governments, which were subsequently abandoned after the coup d'état. He states that

before 2006, "There were public art projects initiated by the Office of Contemporary Art and Culture, Ministry of Culture, which involved public hearings and consultations before drafting plans. It can be said that this was an unprecedented initiative to consider the voices of the people or community. However, this project remained a pilot and was not fully implemented due to the political changes." Therefore, it is feasible to revive such initiatives by learning from international case studies, as discussed in the previous section.

Nevertheless, the outcomes of public art policies (if implemented) can have impacts ranging from the individual level to broader administrative structures. These include: (1) an increase in public artworks; (2) the infusion of communitarian ideas into public art, both in the form of artworks and artistic activities that support education and public participation; (3) the creation of employment opportunities for artists and the elevation of professional standards in the arts through support for artists, art-related professions, academics, and experts; (4) the enhancement of public spaces' aesthetic appeal through public art resulting from these policies; and (5) the contribution to various community and area activities, fostering integration in the future, such as tourism, well-being communities, and strong cultural communities.

Expected Outcomes and Social Impact

1. The creation of public spaces that conserve, preserve, and foster community arts and culture, serving as models for expansion to other areas at the provincial level (if universities have regional aspirations, this can be continued in subsequent years).
2. Sustainable conservation and preservation of community arts and culture through learning processes and knowledge transfer between artists and youth, including enhancing English language skills for cultural communication (long-term impact on the development of children and youth in language and community culture).
3. The establishment of sustainable development networks (policy networks and sustainability) with relevant agencies and stakeholders at both local and national levels.

In summary, the desired policy direction is for the government to provide opportunities for private entities investing in public art projects to receive tax deductions, like other philanthropic endeavors. Additionally, it is hoped that public art initiatives driven by the government will be managed with transparency and environmental responsibility. If the government is to support public art, it should do so at a structural level, such as through urban planning and design, incorporating arts education into everyday life, and establishing tax deduction systems for project sponsors. A dedicated agency or fund should be established to oversee this area, acting as a liaison between the government and private sectors, and managing human resources to ensure professionals in the arts are employed specifically for this purpose.

Furthermore, the project proposes that the government should actively increase public spaces in terms of both quantity and quality, particularly by creating truly public areas in city centers. However, acknowledging that not all these policy requests may be fulfilled, the project focuses on parallel efforts, both through driving cultural learning activities and providing opportunities for people within and outside the community to participate in creating new art accessible to the public within contemporary culture.

Conceptual Framework: Public Art for National Development in Thailand

1. *Public Art at the Core:* Public art serves as the central focus, integrating visual arts, performing arts, and music to create meaningful and impactful experiences in shared spaces.
2. *Interdisciplinary Collaboration:* The overlapping sections represent the collaborative potential between the three art forms. This highlights the importance of breaking down traditional silos and encouraging artists from different disciplines to work together.
3. *Key Concepts Surrounding Public Art:*

   - *Community Engagement:* Public art should involve and reflect the aspirations and concerns of the local community.

   - *Cultural Identity:* It serves as a powerful tool to express and preserve Thailand's rich cultural heritage.

   - *Sustainability:* Public art initiatives should be designed with long-term viability in mind, considering environmental, social, and economic factors.

   - *National Development:* Public art spaces to national development by fostering creativity, enhancing the quality of public spaces, and promoting tourism.

Interdisciplinary Connections and Examples

- *Visual Arts + Performing Arts*: Murals and sculptures can serve as backdrops for dance or theater performances, creating an immersive and dynamic experience.
- *Performing Arts + Music:* Traditional Thai dance and music can be incorporated into public spaces, providing opportunities for cultural exchange and appreciation.
- *Music + Visual Arts:* Interactive sound installations can complement visual artworks, adding another layer of engagement for the audience.
- *All Three Disciplines:* Large-scale festivals or events can showcase the combined power of visual arts, performing arts, and music to create a truly memorable and impactful public art experience.

Sustainable Public Art Initiatives for National Development

- *Community-led Projects:* Empower local communities to participate in the creation and maintenance of public art projects, fostering a sense of ownership and pride.
- *Eco-friendly Materials and Practices*: Utilize sustainable materials and techniques in the creation of public art, minimizing environmental impact.
- *Educational Programs:* Integrate public art into educational initiatives, promoting creativity and cultural understanding among young people.
- *Tourism Promotion:* Develop public art trails and tours to attract visitors and showcase Thailand's unique artistic expressions.
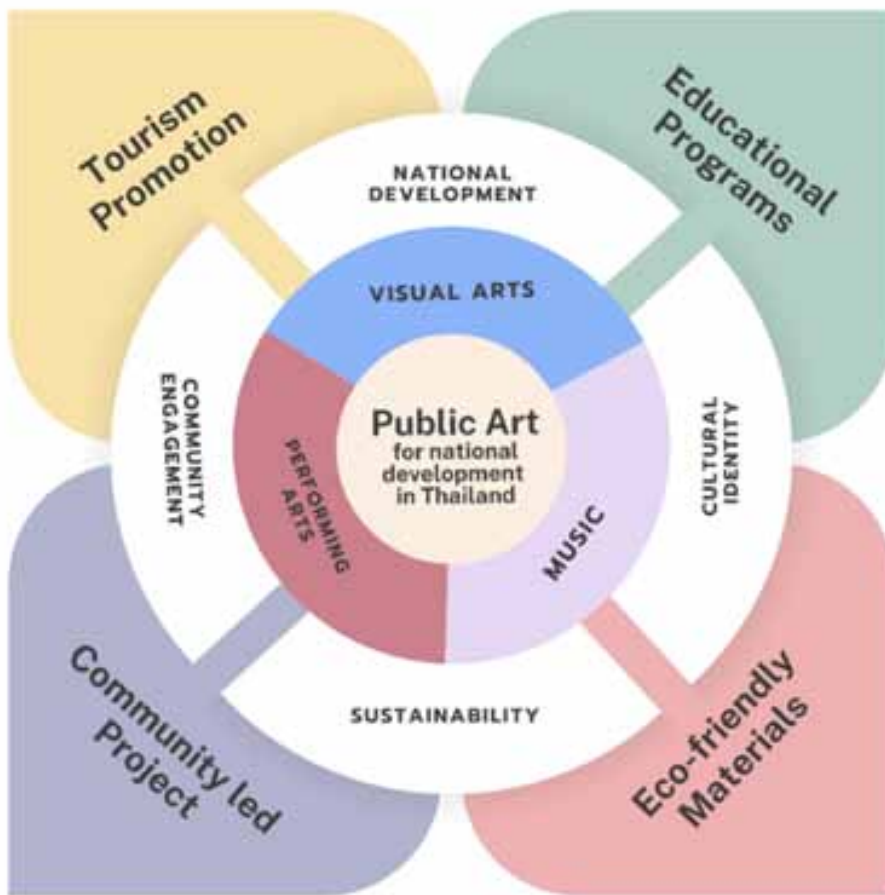
Figure 1. Model Framework for Sustainable Public Art Development in Thailand.

Discussion & Conclusion

This research highlights the potential of public art in Thailand to transcend its aesthetic value and contribute significantly to national development. It underscores the need for a multi-faceted approach that embraces collaborative creativity, community engagement, and sustainable practices.

Key Findings and Implications:

- *Collaborative Creativity:* The study emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary artistic collaboration in creating meaningful public art. This involves not only the creative process but also the utilization of art to promote social learning and community well-being.
- *Social Arts for Societal Challenges:* Public art can offer innovative solutions and alternatives in response to social issues, aligning with the goals of sustainable development. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the effectiveness of public art depends on its specific application and intended outcomes.
- *Policy Recommendations:* Drawing upon successful international models, the research advocates for a supportive policy framework for public art in Thailand. This includes decentralization, community-led initiatives, and the integration of arts into urban planning and everyday life.

- *Sustainable Development Networks:* To ensure long-term viability, fostering sustainable development networks involving government agencies, the private sector & civil society is essential.
- *Cultural Preservation and Communication:* The study stresses the importance of cultural preservation through public art, emphasizing the role of language and cultural communication in fostering understanding and peaceful coexistence.

Challenges and Future Directions:

- *Shifting Perceptions:* A crucial challenge lies in redefining the perceived role of art and artists in society, moving beyond mere beautification to acknowledge their potential for social impact and economic contribution.
- *Community-Centric Approach:* Policies and initiatives should adopt a bottom-up approach, prioritizing the needs and aspirations of local communities. Public art should be rooted in the community's cultural context and facilitate a learning process.
- *Overcoming Implementation Barriers:* While Thailand possesses the resources to support public art, challenges remain in ensuring consistent funding and fostering community understanding of long-term goals.
- *Balancing Policy and Grassroots Efforts:* The volatile political climate in Thailand necessitates a balanced approach that combines top-down policy support with bottom-up, community-driven initiatives.

Overall, this research highlights the transformative potential of public art in Thailand. When grounded in collaboration, sustainability, and community engagement, public art can effectively address social challenges, preserve cultural identity, and promote inclusive national development. By prioritizing these principles, public art becomes a powerful tool for fostering cultural preservation, strengthening social cohesion, and shaping a more vibrant and equitable society.

Recommendations and Future Research Directions

1. *Promotion and Sustainability of Public Art:* Public art initiatives in Thailand should integrate local traditions with contemporary artistic practices, fostering community ownership and cultural preservation. This approach fosters preservation and provides opportunities for ongoing, collaborative work among artists from diverse disciplines. Such a network could ensure sustainability for both artistic livelihoods and the development of innovative performance formats that adapt to pandemic conditions. This would help prevent artist unemployment and enable communities to harness the therapeutic power of art during and after the pandemic, through both preservation and contemporary creation.
2. *Advancement of the Arts through Research and Public Art:* The field of Fine Arts should be broadly developed through knowledge generation, research methodologies, and processes for creating public art. This would enable in-depth artistic creation to address various social issues and facilitate community development through the application of artistic principles.
3. *Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Cultural Welfare:* Arts and culture initiatives should transcend individual organizations or ministries, fostering inter-ministerial collaboration that recognizes the value of "cultural workers." This specialized field, with its

diverse sub-disciplines within the cultural and creative industries, requires integration with economic and security sectors. Cultural welfare initiatives and decentralized community-led management should be implemented to ensure community well-being.

4. *Policy Advocacy for Sustainable Public Art:* Public policies should be promoted to ensure the sustainability of public art, building upon and expanding Sustainable Development Goal 11. The development of creative spaces for community-based arts and cultural learning should lead to national policies that promote such spaces. This includes strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage (SDG 11.4) and creating sustainable supply chains for traditional performing arts.

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Musical Convergence in Cross-Cultural Jazz Composition:

An Analysis of "Spring is Back"

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Abstract

This research analyzes "Spring is Back," a cross-cultural jazz composition rooted in the traditional Chinese folk song "大地回春" ("Earth's Rebirth in Spring"). Through examining its formal structure, thematic development, and harmonic content, the study sheds light on its artistic significance and global resonance. The composition's carefully orchestrated structure and thematic transformation blend elements of folk melody with jazz-inspired rhythm and harmony. Utilizing reharmonization techniques, "Spring is Back" enriches its chord progression with extended chords, quartal and quintal harmony, and contrapuntal bass movement, contributing to its vibrant sound. This research illuminates the transformative power of cross-cultural musical convergence in "Spring is Back," offering insights into creative processes underlying the fusion of musical traditions. Overall, the study deepens understanding of cross-cultural musical fusion and its potential to bridge cultural divides and foster global creative dialogue.

Keywords *Musical Convergence, Cross-Cultural, Jazz Composition, Chinese Folk Song, Thematic Development*

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Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of contemporary music, cross-cultural jazz composition stands as a testament to the power of musical convergence and creative exploration. "Spring is Back," a composition commissioned by the Taipei Jazz Orchestra, serves as an exemplar of the fusion between Chinese folk music and contemporary jazz. Rooted in the traditional Chinese folk song "大地回春" ("Earth's Rebirth in Spring"), this composition embodies the rich tapestry of cross-cultural musical convergence, blending thematic transformation, jazz harmony, and rhythm to create a unique and evocative musical experience. As cross-cultural musical fusion continues to evolve, "Spring is Back" emerges as a compelling case study, offering insights into the interplay between diverse musical traditions. Through an exploration of its formal structure, thematic development, and the integration of musical elements, this research seeks to unravel the complexities of "Spring is Back," shedding light on its artistic significance and its capacity to resonate with audiences worldwide.

Moreover, the widespread appeal of "Spring is Back" is underscored by its performances by jazz orchestras at international festivals including Taichung Jazz Festival, Thailand International Jazz Conference, and Roar Now Bangkah Festival in Taiwan, highlighting its ability to transcend cultural boundaries and captivate diverse audiences. The fusion of jazz with elements of different cultural music has opened new avenues for creative expression, offering musicians a platform to delve into and express cultural differences and similarities through their compositions. In this context, cross-cultural jazz compositions serve as a testament to the dynamic exchange and merging of cultures that occurs when diverse musical traditions intersect. By sharing ideas, techniques, and musical idioms, composers and musicians alike contribute to a vibrant tapestry of cross-cultural musical expression, enriching the global musical landscape and inspiring future generations of artists. Through an analysis of "Spring is Back," this research aims to uncover the underlying mechanisms of cross-cultural musical convergence, illuminating the transformative power of music in bridging cultural divides and fostering creative dialogue on a global scale.

"Spring is Back" is scored for a standard jazz orchestra instrumentation, comprising two alto saxophones, two tenor saxophones, a baritone saxophone, four trumpets, three tenor trombones, bass trombone, an electric guitar, piano, bass, and drums (see Figure 1). This ensemble configuration allows for a rich and diverse sonic palette, with each instrument contributing to the overall texture and color of the composition. The saxophones provide melodic and harmonic support, while the trumpets and trombones add brass brilliance and depth. The rhythm section, consisting of electric guitar, piano, bass, and drums, provides the foundation for the groove and rhythmic drive of the piece. Overall, the instrumentation of "Spring is Back" is carefully balanced to maximize the expressive potential of each instrument within the jazz orchestra.

Figure 1. "Spring is Back" for Jazz Orchestra, transposed Score, mm. 112-116.

Objectives

- To conduct an examination of cross-cultural jazz composition, using "Spring is Back" as a case study, with a focus on understanding how this composition exemplifies the fusion of traditional Chinese folk music with contemporary jazz.
- To analyze the formal structure of both the original Chinese folk song "大地回春" and the jazz composition "Spring is Back," unraveling their organization and the interplay of various musical elements.
- To explore the thematic development within "Spring is Back," including the process of thematic transformation and reinterpretation.
- To investigate the harmonic content of "Spring is Back."

Literature Review

In the realm of music composition, cross-cultural fusion has emerged as a vibrant and dynamic artistic practice, bringing together diverse musical traditions from around the world. Christopher Adler's study (1998) investigates the phenomenon of cross-cultural hybridity, particularly focusing on American composers who incorporate elements from Southeast Asian musical traditions into their works. By examining the process of merging Southeast Asian musical styles with Western techniques, Adler sheds light on the creative journey that unfolds at the intersection of different cultural traditions. Nathinee Chucherdwatanasak's thesis (2014) explores the innovative contributions of composer Narong Prangcharoen to cross-cultural fusion in contemporary composition. Through analysis of Prangcharoen's compositions, Chucherdwatanasak deepens our understanding of how traditional Thai musical elements are seamlessly blended with Western classical and contemporary techniques, resulting in compelling musical expressions that bridge cultural divides. Wiboon Trakulhun's composition (2020), "String Orchestra and Flute," serves as a tribute to the longstanding diplomatic relations between Korea and Thailand. By merging elements from both cultures, including Thai rhythmic patterns and melodies with Korean musical modes, Trakulhun's composition creates a rich and expressive musical landscape that celebrates the beauty of cultural diversity. Complementing these perspectives, Amornmas Mookdamuang and Narongchai Pidokrajt's study (2024) presents Khaen melodies adapted for solo piano using Western compositional methods while preserving their folk essence, offering another model of cross-cultural musical reinterpretation.

The intersection of jazz, cultural globalization, and cross-cultural musical fusion has paved the way for dynamic and transformative developments in the world of music. Stuart Nicholson's "Jazz and Culture in a Global Age" (2014) explores the intricate connection between jazz and cultural globalization, revealing how jazz has transcended borders to become a global phenomenon. By examining the impact of cultural exchange and blending on the genre's evolution, Nicholson provides valuable insights into the transformative power of music in today's interconnected world. Meanwhile, Hwajoon Joo's study (2008) focuses on the pioneering work of Yoon-Seong Cho in Korea, highlighting Cho's innovative approaches to cross-cultural musical fusion. Through analysis of Cho's compositions and performances, Joo underscores the profound intertwining of cultural influences with musical creativity, offering a compelling glimpse into the vibrant landscape of Korean jazz. Additionally, Mo Li's dissertation (2018) traces the evolution of jazz in China, shedding light on its deep-rooted connection with Chinese cultural identity. By exploring how jazz has been embraced, adapted, and reimagined within Chinese society, Li's research offers valuable insights into the dynamic interplay between music, culture, and society. Lastly, Runkun Li's research

(2020) proposes innovative approaches to jazz education in China by synthesizing jazz with traditional Chinese folk songs. By promoting cross-cultural understanding and musical diversity in jazz education and performance contexts, Li's work exemplifies the transformative potential of cross-cultural musical fusion in shaping the future of jazz education and performance.

The relevant literature on jazz analysis and composition reveals key findings and insights that are crucial for understanding the intricacies of jazz composition and arranging for large ensembles. Ted Pease's "Jazz Composition: Theory and Practice" (2003) explores the theoretical foundations of jazz composition, offering practical guidance on the creative process. Pease emphasizes the importance of melody, harmony, rhythm, and form in jazz composition, providing aspiring composers with valuable tools for crafting original jazz works. Additionally, Pease offers insights into arranging for large ensembles, exploring techniques for orchestrating jazz compositions effectively. "Arranging for Large Jazz Ensemble" by Ken Pullig and Dick Lowell (2003) focuses specifically on the art of arranging for large jazz ensembles. This resource covers a wide range of topics, including voicing, instrumentation, and ensemble balance. Pullig and Lowell's book offers practical techniques and strategies for arranging jazz compositions for big bands, providing aspiring arrangers with valuable tools for creating dynamic and engaging arrangements. Richard Lawn's "Jazz Score and Analysis" (2022) provides a detailed exploration of jazz compositions, offering insights into formal structures, harmonic content, and thematic development. Lawn's approach allows for in-depth analysis of jazz scores, enhancing understanding of the compositional techniques employed by jazz composers.

These studies offer valuable insights into the processes, challenges, and implications of cross-cultural musical convergence, providing a rich foundation for the analysis of "Spring is Back" and its role within the broader context of cross-cultural jazz composition.

Form and Analysis

To understand the essence of "Spring is Back" and its utilization of thematic materials from the Chinese folk song "大地回春," it is essential to analyze the formal structure of the original folk song. By examining how "大地回春" organized its motifs and patterns, the analysis can unveil the components that form the groundwork for "Spring is Back." It will offer insights into how the composer blends and reshapes these elements in "Spring is Back," shedding light on the artistic techniques and innovative processes used to merge traditional folk melodies with contemporary jazz influences. Subsequently, the analysis will examine the thematic material, exploring how the original folk melodies are reinterpreted and developed within the jazz composition. Furthermore, the section will delve into the harmonic content, uncovering the rich and colorful palette of chords and progressions that contribute to its vibrant musical tapestry. Through this analysis, a deeper understanding of the creative processes and cross-cultural fusion evident in both compositions will be achieved, illuminating their artistic significance and cultural resonance.

Score reduction is employed in this research to facilitate music analysis by simplifying the composition into more manageable forms. By reducing the number of parts or simplifying the arrangement, the researcher can focus on the essential elements of the music. This process allows for a clearer understanding of the composition's structure, thematic development, and harmonic content.

Formal Structure of "大地回春"
The Chinese folk song "大地回春" adheres to a structured musical form known as AABA. This form delineates the song into distinct sections, each with its unique characteristics. The A section (theme A), spanning 10 measures, serves as the foundational thematic material of the song. Within this section, recurring motifs are evident, further divisible into two-measure phrases, denoted as "a-b-b-b-b." These motifs repeat multiple times, instilling a sense of familiarity and continuity throughout the composition. Melodically, the A section predominantly employs quarter notes, imparting a steady and grounded quality to this part of the song. The melodic range in the A section comfortably spans from the note B3 in the lower register to D5 in the higher register.

Figure 2. "大地回春," A Section.

In contrast, the B section (theme B), comprising 8 measures, provides a distinctive departure from the A section's characteristics. Here, the rhythmic dynamics are more pronounced, featuring eighth notes. The B section consists of two discernible motifs, divisible into one-measure phrases, represented as two sets of "c-c-d-c," introducing rhythmic and melodic diversity into the composition. Despite these variations, the melodic range in the B section remains within the comfortable register established in the A section, from E4 to E5. The B section contributes to the composition's overall structure by introducing a contrasting rhythmic and melodic palette.

Figure 3. "大地回春," B Section.

Notably, the last two measures of the initial A section differ from the subsequent A sections. In the first A section, these final measures conclude on the note C4, while in the second and third A sections, the last notes consistently resolve to C5. This subtle variation in the closing measures adds complexity to the song's structure, creating a sense of development and progression. In summary, the AABA form of "大地回春" provides a well-structured framework for the song, with the A sections establishing the primary thematic material, steady rhythms, and a tonal center in C. The B section introduces contrast through rhythmic variation and distinctive motifs. The subtle variation in the final measures of the A

sections enhances the song's overall narrative and contributes to its enduring appeal and adaptability for various interpretations and arrangements.

Formal Structure of "Spring is Back"

"Spring is Back" exhibits a well-defined formal structure, orchestrating its musical narrative with distinct sections and motifs. The composition's formal structure can be outlined as follows:

Measures (Rehearsal Letter)	Sections	References
1-8	Introduction	Fragments of motif 'a' from "大地回春"
9-42 (A, B)	Primary Theme	"大地回春," A Section
43-54 (C)	Secondary Theme	"大地回春," B Section
55-65 (D)	Primary Theme	"大地回春," A Section
66-101 (E, F, G, H)	Improvisation Section	The harmonic progression of the secondary theme in "Spring is Back"
102-113 (I)	Secondary Theme	"大地回春," B Section
114-124 (J)	Closing Theme	"大地回春," A Section
125-141 (K)	Coda	Fragments of motif 'a' from "大地回春"

Figure 4. Table of the Formal Structure of "Spring is Back."

Introduction (Measures 1-8)

The composition commences with an introduction characterized by the rhythm section's medium-tempo, quasi-Latin, straight sixteenths rhythm. This rhythm introduces a loose and broken approach with a non-repetitive pattern, which lays the foundation for the rhythmic feel that permeates the entire composition.
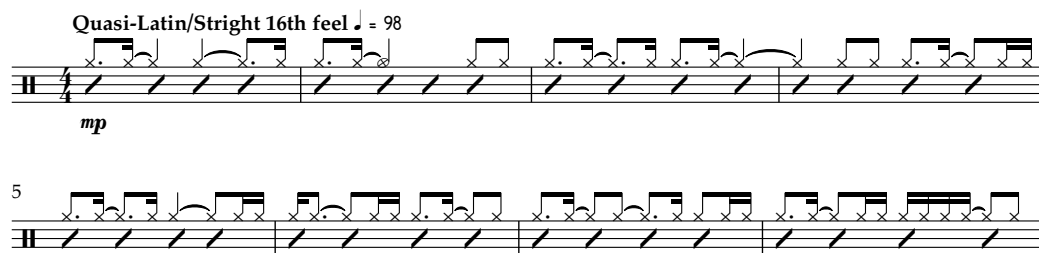
Figure 5. Cymbal Pattern Realization, "Spring is Back," mm. 1-8.

Primary Theme, Rehearsal Letter A (Measures 9-29)

At this point, the melody emerges, initially voiced by the trombones, tenor saxophones, and baritone saxophone in measures 9-16. Trumpets and alto saxophones join the ensemble at measure 17, while measures 20-29 feature alto saxophones and trumpets 1 and 2 taking over the melody, accompanied by the trombones.

Figure 6. "Spring is Back," mm. 17-29.

Primary Theme, Rehearsal Letter B (Measures 30-42)

This section revisits the main theme but in a shorter and more condensed form. It begins with a single-measure presentation by the trombones, tenor saxophones, and baritone saxophone, answered by a one-measure response from the trumpets and alto saxophones. Notably, measure 33 introduces a meter change to 3/4 time, creating four over three poly-rhythms that momentarily convey a heightened sense of rhythm. Measures 36-42 feature alto saxophones and trumpets 1 and 2 reprising the melody, while tenor saxophones and trumpets 3 and 4 contribute a counter melody, and the trombones offer accompanying support.

Figure 7. "Spring is Back," Rehearsal Letter B.

Secondary Theme, Rehearsal Letter C (Measures 43-54)
This segment initiates with the trombones delivering the melody in measures 43-46, followed by the trumpets in measures 47-50. Concurrently, the saxophones contribute linear counter lines from measures 48-53. Measures 53-54 introduce a complex rhythm in 7/8 time, creating forward momentum that leads into the subsequent section, Rehearsal Letter D.

Figure 8. "Spring is Back," Rehearsal Letter C.

Primary Theme, Rehearsal Letter D (Measures 55-65)
In this section, the trombones majestically deliver the melody in unison (mm. 55-60), welcoming the arrival of "springtime." Subsequently, alto saxophones and trumpets 1 and 2 join in, accompanied by the rest of the orchestra. The rhythm section switches to a quasi-Latin rhythm in measures 60-62, infusing a sense of joy and celebration into the composition.

Improvisation Section, Rehearsal Letters E, F, G, H (Measures 66-101)
The subsequent sections serve as improvisational opportunities for a soloist, potentially a trumpet, guitar, or piano, depending on the director's discretion. Rehearsal Letter E (mm. 66-73) employs a harmonic progression similar to Rehearsal Letter C, with minor modifications in measures 70-73, featuring an ascending bass movement. As the soloist improvises, background instrumentation gradually enters in Rehearsal Letters F and G, starting with the trombones playing the horn fifths.
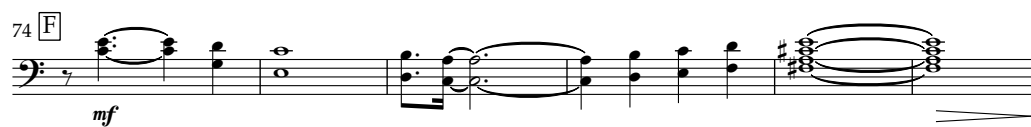
Figure 9. Horn fifths by the trombones in mm. 74-75, "Spring is Back."

In Rehearsal Letter H, the soloist's improvisation continues. Simultaneously, alto and tenor saxophones, trombones 1 and 2, and trumpets 3 and 4 perform a repeated rhythmic pattern in thirds, with the baritone saxophone and trombones 3 and 4 introducing a counter line. This section gradually crescendos, leading to the climax at Rehearsal Letter I.

Figure 10. Repeated rhythmic pattern in thirds, "Spring is Back," Rehearsal Letter H.

Secondary Theme, Rehearsal Letter I (Measures 102-113)
Rehearsal Letter I revisits the melodic and harmonic content of Rehearsal Letter C. However, additional instruments are introduced, enriching the orchestral texture. Measure 113 prepares the modulation to Rehearsal Letter J, transitioning the composition to the key of E-flat. Notably, measure 113 is in 4/4 time, contrasting with the 7/8 time signature at the end of Rehearsal Letter C (m. 54).

Closing Theme, Rehearsal Letter J (Measures 114-124)
This section, similar in structure to Rehearsal Letter D, transposes the composition to the key of E-flat. This transposition symbolizes a new day and new life, with linear counter lines from alto and tenor saxophones contributing to the sense of forward movement and development.

Figure 11. "Spring is Back," mm. 112-120.

Coda, Rehearsal Letter K (Measures 125-141)

The composition concludes with Rehearsal Letter K, during which the drums are featured, providing a solo improvisation. The remainder of the orchestra supports the drum solo by delivering repeated rhythmic figures, culminating in a lively and rhythmic conclusion.

The formal structures of both "大地回春" and "Spring is Back" exhibit meticulous organization and thematic development, offering insights into their artistic complexities and cultural significance. "大地回春" adheres to the AABA form, providing a structured framework characterized by recurring motifs and subtle variations that contribute to its enduring appeal. In contrast, "Spring is Back" orchestrates its narrative with distinct sections, each contributing to the composition's overarching theme of renewal and celebration. From the introduction to the coda, "Spring is Back" navigates through various thematic elements and improvisational sections, showcasing a vibrant musical tapestry that captures the essence of springtime.

Thematic Material

In the primary theme at Rehearsal Letter A, the melody undergoes thematic transformation by expanding the first two measures of the original melody from "大地回春" into ten measures (mm. 9-18). While the first two notes of the original melody are shortened, the rest of the melody utilizes augmentation, although not in proportionate values (see Figure 12). This augmentation technique elongates the melodic lines, creating a sense of suspension and development. By expanding the original motif into a longer melody, the composer achieves a more elaborate and nuanced expression while still retaining the essence of the original theme. This thematic transformation not only adds complexity to the melody but also allows for greater variation and exploration within the composition.
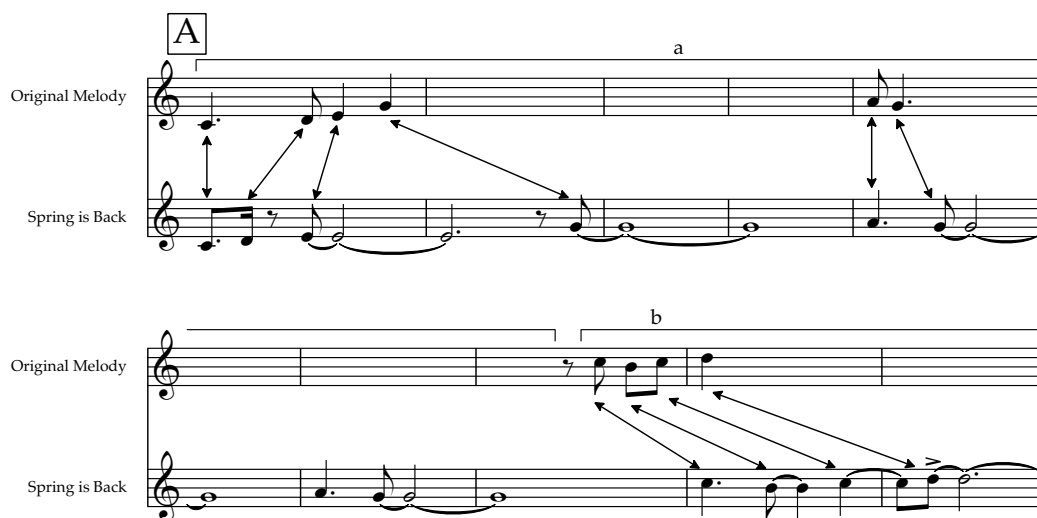
Figure 12. Thematic material, "Spring is Back," mm. 9-18.

In Rehearsal Letter B, the primary theme undergoes a transformation compared to its presentation in Rehearsal Letter A. The melody in Rehearsal Letter B is truncated and fragmented, with shorter rhythmic values (see Figure 13). This alteration creates a sense of propulsion and forward momentum in the music. Unlike the more expansive and flowing melody in Rehearsal Letter A, the theme in Rehearsal Letter B is characterized by its brevity and rhythmic urgency. The use of shorter rhythmic values contributes to a sense of drive and anticipation, propelling the music forward and adding a dynamic energy to the composition. Despite the truncation and fragmentation, the theme maintains its melodic essence, albeit in a more condensed and intensified form, further enhancing the overall musical narrative of "Spring is Back."
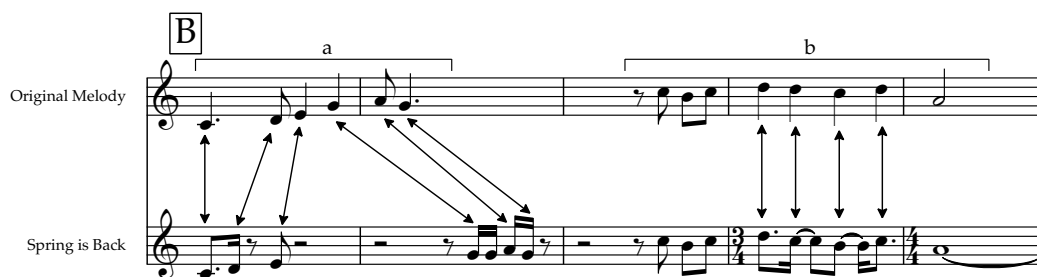
Figure 13. Thematic material, "Spring is Back," mm. 30-34.

The secondary theme introduced at Rehearsal Letter C draws inspiration from Theme B in the original folk song "大地回春." While Theme B in the folk song consists of one-measure phrases, the secondary theme in "Spring is Back" expands these phrases into two-measure phrases (mm. 43-50). This expansion allows for greater development and elaboration of the melodic material, enriching the musical texture. Additionally, the secondary theme incorporates syncopation and sixteenth-note subdivision, which are rhythmic and melodic elements characteristic of jazz composition. These rhythmic features infuse the theme with a sense of vitality and groove, contributing to the overall energy of the composition. By blending elements of the original folk melody with jazz-inspired rhythms and phrasing, the secondary theme in "Spring is Back" exemplifies the fusion of traditional and contemporary musical styles.

Figure 14. Thematic material, "Spring is Back," mm. 43-52.

In the last two measures of the secondary theme in "Spring is Back" (mm. 53-54), there is a notable shift in both meter and rhythm. The meter changes from 4/4 to 7/8, introducing an irregular and asymmetrical feel. This change in meter creates a sense of rhythmic tension and unpredictability, disrupting the established rhythmic patterns and adding interest to the music. Additionally, there is a simultaneous change in pitch (m. 54), with the melody moving to different notes than those heard previously. This pitch change, combined with the altered meter, contributes to the overall sense of disorientation and unexpectedness in the music. The use of 7/8 meter and pitch change in these final measures of the secondary theme adds a unique and distinctive character to the composition, further highlighting the creative exploration of rhythmic and melodic elements.

Figure 15. Thematic material, "Spring is Back," mm. 53-54.

Thematic transformation in "Spring is Back" involves the reinterpretation and development of thematic material derived from the traditional Chinese folk song "大地回春." Through thematic transformation, the composer expands, fragments, and embellishes the original melodic motifs, rhythm, and harmonic elements, while also incorporating syncopation and other characteristics typical of jazz composition. This reimagining of the original theme

allows for the creation of new musical ideas and variations, resulting in a composition that retains elements of its folk music roots while also embracing the stylistic nuances of contemporary jazz. Thematic transformation serves as a key creative device in "Spring is Back," enabling the composer to explore the adaptability and versatility of musical elements across cultural boundaries and genres.

Harmonic Content

In "Spring is Back," the harmonic content is rich and colorful, employing reharmonization techniques commonly found in jazz. While the original chord progression of "大地回春" mainly consists diatonic chords, the jazz composition reimagines these harmonies to create a more dynamic and expressive harmonic palette. Reharmonization involves substituting or adding chords to the original harmonic framework, resulting in greater complexity and variety. This technique allows for the exploration of different tonal colors, tensions, and harmonic relationships, enhancing the overall harmonic texture of the composition. By employing reharmonization, "Spring is Back" achieves a harmonically rich and vibrant sound that complements its cross-cultural fusion of traditional Chinese folk music with contemporary jazz elements.

In the primary theme at Rehearsal Letter A, where the melody is in the C major scale, the composer employs harmonies that add color and richness to the melody. Instead of simply using basic triadic chords, the composer assigns extended chords to each note of the melody. This technique involves harmonizing the melody so that it lands on the seventh, ninth and eleventh degrees of the chord, creating more complex and colorful harmonic textures. By incorporating extended chords, such as seventh, ninth and eleventh chords, the composer enhances the harmonic richness of the primary theme, adding depth and sophistication to the overall sound of the composition.

Figure 16. Extended chords in "Spring is Back," mm. 9-20.

At Rehearsal Letter B, the harmony becomes more complex, incorporating upper-structure triads, quartal, and quintal harmony. Upper-structure triads are formed by combining a basic triad with upper chord tones, often resulting in rich and colorful harmonies. Quartal and quintal harmony (and their inversions), based on intervals of fourths and fifths respectively, add a modern and adventurous sound to the composition. Additionally, the bass movement in this section often moves in contrary motion to the melody, creating a sense of tension and forward motion. This harmonic complexity, combined with the intricate interplay between melody and bass, contributes to the dynamic and engaging nature of the primary theme at Rehearsal Letter B.

Figure 17. Upper-structure triads, quartal and quintal harmony in "Spring is Back," mm. 32-40.

In the secondary theme at Rehearsal Letter C, the harmonic progression undergoes a significant transformation. In the first four measures (mm. 43-46), the bass movement descends in a series of chords, starting with A minor. This descending bass line creates a sense of stability and resolution. However, in measures 47-54, the harmonic progression provides contrast, as the bass movement ascends by half steps. This ascending bass line introduces tension and instability, leading to a sense of anticipation and forward motion in the music. Additionally, the progression concludes with an unexpected cadential six-four chord, where it moves up a half step to A-flat seventh suspended-four instead of the expected five-seventh chord. This unexpected resolution adds a sense of surprise and intrigue to the harmonic progression, contributing to the overall complexity and depth of the composition.

Figure 18. Secondary theme with chord progression and bass line, "Spring is Back," mm. 43-54.

The improvisation section in "Spring is Back" (mm. 66-101) draws on ideas from the harmonic progression in the secondary theme to provide a platform for solo exploration. Initially, the first four measures of the improvisation section mirror the descending bass movement seen in the first two measures of the secondary theme, establishing a familiar harmonic foundation. However, in measures 70-73, the bass movement shifts upward, reminiscent of the harmonic progression in the secondary theme. At Rehearsal Letter F (mm. 74-81), the harmonic rhythm lengthens to four measures per chord, allowing the soloist to explore the modal possibilities of this section, such as F Lydian and F-sharp Dorian, in contrast to the previous eight measures where there were two chords per measure (see Figure 19). The solo continues into Rehearsal Letter G, which revisits the progression from Rehearsal Letter E (mm. 66-73). At Rehearsal Letter H (mm. 90-101), the soloist once again has the opportunity to utilize jazz modal concepts for improvisation, further expanding the expressive possibilities of the composition.

Figure 19. A live performance transcription of an improvised solo by Taipei Jazz Orchestra's pianist at the 2023 Taichung Jazz Festival, "Spring is Back," mm. 64-81.

In the transition to the closing theme (mm. 112-113) of "Spring is Back," there is a harmonic shift from the key of C to a new key. The cadential 6/4 chord in the key of C moves upwards to an A-flat seventh suspended-four chord, creating a sense of tension and anticipation. This A-flat seventh suspended-four chord then moves to an A seventh suspended-four chord, further heightening the feeling of resolution and preparing for the transition to the closing theme. At Rehearsal Letter J, the closing theme begins in the new key, with the trombones prominently playing the theme in E-flat. This harmonic shift and thematic transition symbolize the concept of rebirth in spring, marking a significant moment of musical transformation and renewal in the composition.

Figure 20. Transition to the closing theme in "Spring is Back," mm. 112-114.

"Spring is Back" employs a diverse and colorful harmonic palette, blending traditional jazz harmony with reharmonization techniques to create a rich and dynamic musical landscape. Through the use of upper-structure triads, quartal and quintal harmony, and contrapuntal bass movement, the composition achieves a sense of complexity and depth. The harmonic content of "Spring is Back" serves to enhance the thematic material and contribute to the overall narrative of the piece, providing a harmonious fusion of traditional Chinese folk music and contemporary jazz elements.

Discussion and Conclusion

The research aimed to explore the fusion of traditional Chinese folk music with contemporary jazz in the composition "Spring is Back," shedding light on the processes of thematic transformation, formal structure, and harmonic content within the piece. By analyzing these elements, the study sought insights into cross-cultural musical convergence and its significance in the realm of jazz composition. The analysis revealed several key findings. The formal structure of "Spring is Back" was examined, revealing a well-defined organization comprising distinct sections such as introduction, primary theme, secondary theme, improvisation section, and closing theme. The thematic development within each section showcased the composer's adept use of thematic transformation, expanding, fragmenting, and reimagining motifs from the original Chinese folk song "大地回春" to create a dynamic and cohesive musical narrative. Also, the harmonic content of the composition was rich and colorful, employing reharmonization techniques to enhance the traditional jazz harmony with complex and vibrant chord progressions.

These findings contribute to our understanding of cross-cultural jazz composition by demonstrating how "Spring is Back" integrates elements from two distinct musical traditions, resulting in a unique and evocative musical experience. The study underscores the transformative power of music in bridging cultural divides and fostering creative dialogue on a global scale, highlighting the potential for cross-cultural musical convergence to en-

rich the global musical landscape. In the context of previous research, the findings of this study align with existing literature on cross-cultural musical fusion and its implications for music composition. Christopher Adler's study (1998) and Nathinee Chucherdwatanasak's thesis (2014) provide valuable insights into the processes and challenges of cross-cultural hybridity in music composition, while Stuart Nicholson's work (2014) offers a broader perspective on the connection between jazz and cultural globalization. The analysis of "Spring is Back" builds upon these insights, showcasing a compelling example of cross-cultural musical convergence in action.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this research. The analysis focused solely on "Spring is Back," limiting the generalizability of the findings to other cross-cultural jazz compositions. Additionally, the study primarily relied on musical analysis, with limited consideration of the cultural and historical contexts surrounding the composition. The findings of this research underscore the significance of cross-cultural musical convergence in contemporary jazz composition, as exemplified by "Spring is Back." By blending elements from traditional Chinese folk music with contemporary jazz techniques, the composition highlights the transformative power of music in bridging cultural divides and fostering creative dialogue. The study contributes to the broader literature on cross-cultural musical fusion, offering insights into the processes, challenges, and implications of this dynamic and evolving artistic practice.

In conclusion, the research on "Spring is Back" has provided valuable insights into the phenomenon of cross-cultural jazz composition. Through a detailed analysis of the composition's formal structure, thematic development, and harmonic content, this study has illuminated the interplay between traditional Chinese folk music and contemporary jazz elements. The analysis revealed the composer's adept use of thematic transformation, reharmonization techniques, and rhythmic exploration to create a dynamic and cohesive musical narrative. Moreover, the findings of this research underscore the transformative power of cross-cultural musical convergence in bridging cultural divides and fostering creative dialogue on a global scale. By integrating elements from two distinct musical traditions, "Spring is Back" serves as an example of the potential for cross-cultural fusion to enrich the global musical landscape and resonate with diverse audiences worldwide.

While this study focused specifically on "Spring is Back," its findings have broader implications for our understanding of cross-cultural jazz composition. By building upon existing literature and offering perspectives on the processes and artistic techniques underlying cross-cultural musical fusion, this research contributes to a deeper appreciation of the dynamic and evolving nature of contemporary jazz composition. Future research could explore a broader range of compositions and incorporate interdisciplinary approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of cross-cultural musical convergence in jazz. By continuing to investigate the socio-cultural dynamics at play in cross-cultural jazz composition, researchers can highlight how music has the power to bridge cultural gaps and promote mutual understanding and appreciation across different cultures.

ken for their exceptional leadership. The researcher would also like to thank the RSU Jazz Orchestra for their outstanding performance at the Thailand International Jazz Conference. Their collaboration and dedication made this research possible.

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The Walasuji Tradition: Forgotten Meanings And Values

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Abstract

The Walasuji tradition is one of the cultural activities of the Bugis Makassar community, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. It can be found at wedding celebrations as a large gate made of bamboo called "Baruga" Walasuji. However, it is hard to find Baruga Walasuji at youth's wedding nowadays. Whereas the tradition has unique meaning and values which are good to preserve. This study employed a data validation triangulation method involving interviews, literature review, and observations. Subsequently, the analysis was carried out using a qualitative approach known as the "Three Layers of Culture" method. The results of the study show how meaning and values of the tradition are transferred to each behaviors of the tradition and how intervention factors affect them. The research shows some behaviors which are not relevant anymore in modern context. Therefore, knowledge about the condition of values and meanings in the Walasuji tradition today can be important information to consider when deciding whether to preserve or innovate so that the tradition survives.

Keywords: *Bugis Makassar, Culture, Indonesia, Values, Walasuji, Tradition*

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Introduction

Tradition is a series of practices, beliefs, and values passed down within a group or society, often involving rituals, ceremonies, and social activities regularly carried out by previous generations and inherited to future generations for the purpose of preserving identity (Pabbajah, et al. 2021; Ciptandi, 2020). Tradition can also be understood as past customs that preserved to the present day (Nugraha, 2010). Historical events originating from ancestors, resulting from a significant event or issue experienced on a massive scale within a community, give rise to these traditions. Consequently, traditions emerge as thoughtful solutions devised by the ancestors of that time and are repeated continuously because they have proven effective in addressing these issues (Dove, 2021; Haidle and Jürgen, 2011). Therefore, activities within a tradition carry profound meanings and values revered by a specific group of people and have successfully permeated their way of life.

During the process of passing down traditions across generations, some cases have noted that the values within these traditions undergo degradation due to various factors, with one of the most influential being the intervention of time, leading to a tradition's potential acculturation or transformation (Kunst, et al. 2021; Moftizadeh, et al. 2021). Therefore, it is essential to pay attention to the motivations behind the emergence of a particular tradition to understand the driving forces that have kept that tradition alive until today. Over the course of time, these motivations have created profound meanings and values that continue to be passed down, shaping the character of specific communities in the present day (Andreescu and Andra, 2022).

Particularly in Indonesia, a country rich in diverse traditions and cultures, issues related to the preservation of traditions are always considered vital in order to safeguard something considered valuable and that has played a significant role in shaping the nation's identity and character. Preservation efforts are not limited to conservative methods alone but also include transformative approaches, recognizing that change is an inevitability that affects the essence of traditions. Consequently, preserving traditions without taking into account potential intervention factors that may influence the tradition itself can accelerate its decline (Ciptandi, et al. 2022; Hani and Amarendra 2019). With certainty, the fundamental factors that form the foundation of these traditions should also be thoroughly examined and understood proportionally.

One tradition that has grown and deeply rooted itself in Indonesia is the "Walasuji" tradition originating from Makassar, South Sulawesi. Initially, this tradition was a form of celebration practiced by the traditional Bugis Makassar community when getting married. It involved constructing a large bamboo gate, which was previously considered a standard by the community (Musliadi and Reski, 2023; Saleh, 2019). However, as time has passed, there has been a shift in the application of the Walasuji tradition. This shift encompasses both practical aspects, as the wedding gate is now rarely seen, and philosophical aspects that were once regarded as noble but have been forgotten (Carles, et al. 2021). This transformation has been driven by the disruptive phenomenon of rapid information exchange through various media and technology, offering alternatives for individuals to adopt new perspectives on their way of life (Lim, 2022).

In the context of the Walasuji tradition, this phenomenon is explained by Charles et al. (2021) as the influence of modern wedding decoration trends and changes in the attitudes and characteristics of young people who have become followers of popular trends. How-

ever, if examined more deeply, it is believed that the Walasuji tradition still holds important values that align with the characteristics of the Makassar community and are considered relevant for use in contemporary life based on local wisdom. Therefore, in the initial stages, it is essential to rediscover these significant values that have been forgotten for so long, so that they can be reintroduced to the Bugis Makassar community. It's important to acknowledge the existence of intervention factors that have influenced the changes in the tradition, as well as the possibilities of certain aspects of the tradition having to be abandoned because they no longer align with the context of modern life today.

Research Methods

This research is a qualitative study, with the first phase employing the method of data source triangulation validation. This method involves gathering specific information from various data sources to gain insights from multiple perspectives, which are then synthesized (Khoa, et al. 2023; Flick, 2018), as illustrated in Figure 1.
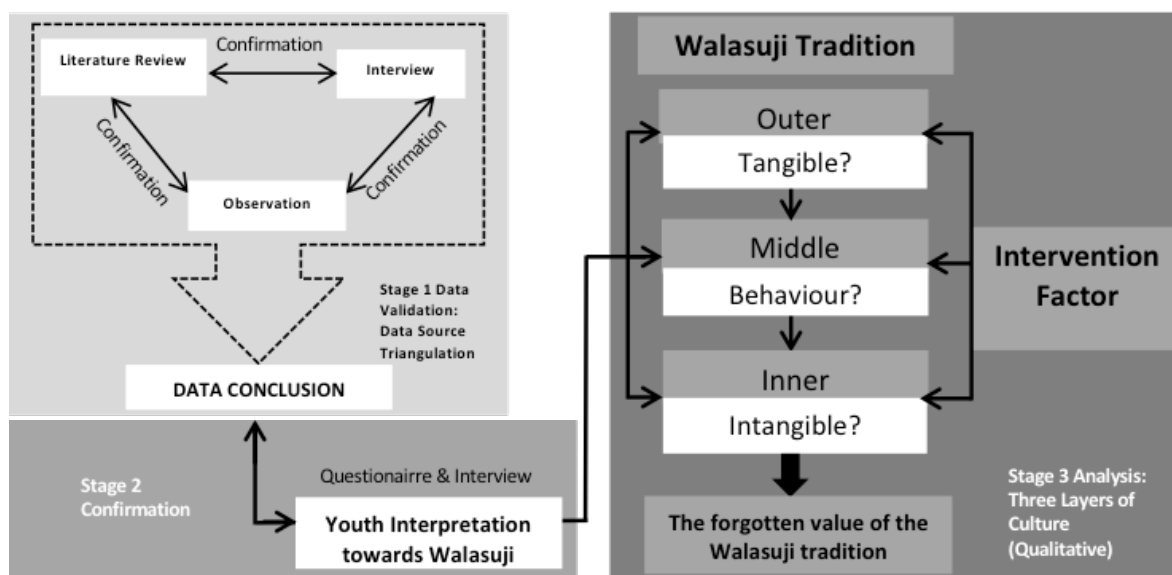
Figure 1. Research Methodology Schema.

The data collection techniques used are:

1. Observation is carried out by observing the process of making the Baruga Walasuji in the Mattiro Sompe Sub-district, Pinrang Regency, and the Mallusetasi Sub-district, Barru District, South Sulawesi. The observation is conducted from the researcher's perspective, involving direct observation of how the behavior, interactions, and technical aspects are carried out in the process of creating the Baruga Walasuji by the local residents.

2. The literature review is conducted by comparing the data gathered from observations and interviews with the findings of previous research studies. These earlier studies may have employed different methods and perspectives, but they all focus on the same subject, which is the Walasuji tradition of the Bugis Makassar community.

3. Interviews are conducted with traditional figures who are highly respected by the local community, often referred to as elders. In this case, interviews are carried out with Mr.

Puang Bareng in Pinrang District and Mrs. Andi Hasna in Barru District. These individuals are considered valuable sources of information for the research because they are descendants of the Makassar kingdom and have a long-standing tradition of practicing Walasuji, passed down through generations. They are also believed to have a deep understanding of the cultural and symbolic meanings embedded within the Walasuji tradition. Interviews with informants were limited to figures who were truly believed to know information about the values and meanings of Walasuji traditionally. In the current conditions, with the values and meanings of Walasuji forgotten, it is increasingly complex to find figures who still have pure knowledge of Walasuji. Therefore, confirmation was also carried out on previous data, namely observation and literature studies, to validate the data from the two figures.

The gathered data will be further advanced to the second stage by seeking confirmation from the Bugis Makassar youth regarding the present-day Walasuji tradition. This is done to ensure that there has been a shift in how these young individuals interpret and experience the values embedded within Walasuji. In the third stage, the condition of this tradition will be mapped out using the "Three Layers of Culture" framework (Leong and Clark, 2003). This method categorizes the structure of tradition or culture into three layers, aiding in explaining how the tradition manifests within each of these layers, as well as identifying the factors that intervene in it.

As depicted in Figure 1, these three layers consist of the "tangible" layer as the outermost layer, the "behavior" layer as the middle layer, and the "intangible" layer as the innermost layer. These three layers are interconnected; what is visible in the tradition (outer level) is a manifestation of the behaviors of the community practicing the tradition (middle level), and these behaviors stem from the values and beliefs they hold within the tradition (inner level). Through this method, it is expected to schematically illustrate the meaning and values that truly underpin the Walasuji tradition, culminating in the Walasuji tradition that is known to the community as "tangible." This method is employed to provide a clear depiction that behind every activity in the creation of the Baruga Walasuji (the Walasuji tradition), there are specific values and meanings at the core of the tradition's implementation.

Results and Discussion
Bugis Makassar Youth Perception and Experience Towards Walasuji Tradition
A number of studies have been conducted to examine the Walasuji tradition. Firstly, research conducted by (Musliadi and Reski, 2023) and Elvira (2014) has highlighted that the Walasuji tradition originated as an expression of the Bugis Makassar community's orientation towards the natural environment surrounding them. In the past, Makassar was rich in bamboo plants, and various aspects of community life were made from bamboo, including the Walasuji gate used in wedding celebrations. Research by (Saleh, 2023; Sudirman, et al. 2019; Ramadan, 2019) explains that Walasuji portrays the social strata of the community implied through the bamboo weaving patterns on the Baruga Walasuji. This implies that the Walasuji tradition carries social and political values based on social status, namely noble and non-noble. However, it is further explained that Walasuji also embodies values such as social responsibility, mutual cooperation, discipline, and communicativeness. This means that although the artifact's form of the Baruga Walasuji signifies the social status of

the bridal family, the process of creating the Baruga Walasuji teaches that despite differ-ent social statuses, the Bugis Makassar community should support each other. This implies that the Walasuji tradition itself is a positive aspect of Bugis Makassar community life that should be preserved. This idea is also supported by research conducted by Akramul-lah (2023), who attempts to incorporate the Walasuji tradition as a teaching material in elementary schools in Makassar because it is considered to contain values that align with character education objectives.

Unfortunately, in today's circumstances, the practice of the Walasuji tradition itself is gradually being abandoned, especially by the young Bugis Makassar generations, leading to the diminishing of its inherent values. The bamboo gate of the Baruga Walasuji, traditional-ly crafted for wedding ceremonies, has now been replaced by modern wedding decorations preferred by the younger generations. Based on a questionnaire administered to a sample of 100 young Bugis Makassar individuals from Pinrang and Barru regencies in South Su-lawesi, aged between 15-35 years, we were able to assess the perceptions and knowledge of these youth regarding the Walasuji tradition. The data is presented in chart format, as depicted in Figure 2.
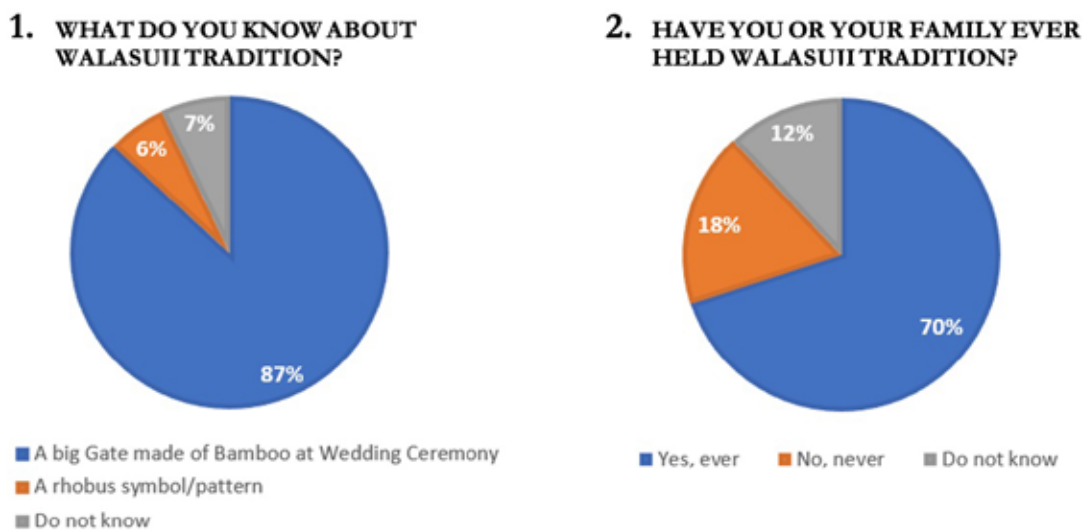
Figure 2. Bugis Makassar Youth Perception and Experience Towards Walasuji Tradition.

The first question pertains to respondents' knowledge of the Walasuji tradition (see Figure 2 on the left). Interview results indicate that a significant 87% of the respondents are fa-miliar with Walasuji in its literal sense, which involves the creation of a large bamboo gate as a marker for wedding ceremonies. A smaller group, comprising 6% of the respondents, mistakenly identified Walasuji as a diamond-shaped motif, which is actually the symbol of "sulappa eppa" and is also an ornament on the gate. Meanwhile, the remaining 7% of the respondents either do not know or are unsure about what the Walasuji tradition is, and therefore chose to answer that they do not know.

Moving on to the second question, it aimed to uncover whether the respondents or their families had previously conducted the Walasuji tradition (see Figure 2 on the right). The results show that the majority of respondents, accounting for 70%, have indeed organized the Walasuji tradition at some point. However, 18% of the respondents stated that they had never organized it, while the remaining 12% were uncertain whether their families had ever conducted the Walasuji tradition or not.

Subsequently, additional follow-up questions were presented to know their interest in preserving the tradition. Specifically, they were asked if, in the event of their own wedding, they would consider using the Walasuji tradition or not, as depicted in Figure 3.

BUGIS MAKASSAR YOUTH'S REASON FOR NOT HELDING WALASUJI TRADITION ON THEIR WEDDING

Others — 4,00%
Prefer modern wedding decorations — 22%
Bamboo and economic factor — 24,00%
Feel not Obligated — 50,00%

(x-axis: 0,00% 10,00% 20,00% 30,00% 40,00% 50,00% 60,00%)

■ Bugis Makassar Youth (age 15-35 yo)
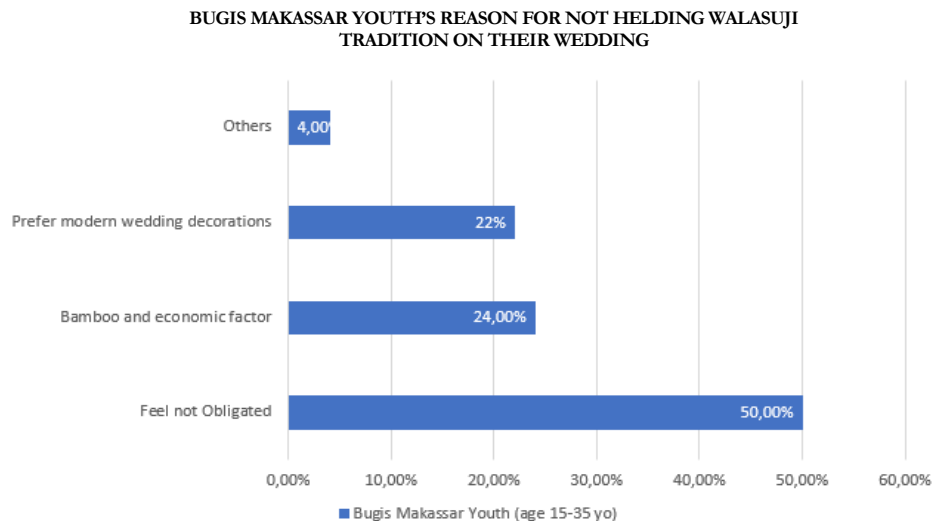
Figure 3. Bugis Makassar youth's reason for not helding Walasuji Tradition.

Based on Figure 3, a total of 50 respondents provided reasons for not conducting the Walasuji tradition. Here are some quotes from the open-ended responses of young Bugis Makassar individuals regarding this question:

- "Walasuji is only for specific Bugis families (Andi people)."
- "Creating it (Walasuji) requires many people, while preparing for a wedding is already quite demanding."
- "We are not obligated to hold Walasuji. If we can afford it, we will, and if not, we won't, depending on the circumstances."
- "My husband is not Bugis, so he doesn't know what Walasuji is."

According to 50% of respondents, they generally believe that the Walasuji tradition at wedding ceremonies is not considered mandatory. The reasons behind this view are varied, because they are not descendants of the nobility, known locally as "Andi ." Some find organizing the Walasuji tradition to be quite troublesome, and others simply admit to being unaware of this tradition altogether. Additionally, mainly related to the difficulty and cost of obtaining the primary material bamboo. So, it can be seen that for this group, the Walasuji tradition is just a choice of decisions that do not have a negative impact if not carried out. They have lost their understanding and appreciation of the actual values of Walasuji.

As many as 24 respondents expressed their difficulties in sourcing bamboo, citing financial constraints, as mentioned in the following open-ended question:

- "When I was a child, bamboo was readily available in the garden. Now, the garden has turned into a residential area."
- "Creating Walasuji requires a significant amount of money, not only for buying a large quantity of materials but also for paying the craftsmen."

In today's changing times and evolving social conditions, the scarcity of bamboo area as the primary material for making Walasuji has become a challenge. In the quote, "…just take it from the yard," it implies that in the past, making Walasuji didn't require buying bamboo because bamboo grew wild and was readily available for free. Meanwhile, the second quote expresses the reluctance due to the need not only to purchase materials but also to "pay craftsmen." They further explain that the process of creating the Baruga Walasuji takes about 2 weeks and involves a significant number of people, which not everyone can do as they did in the past. Today, if someone wants to create a Baruga Walasuji, they have to hire specialized "craftsmen" for the task. Another factor contributing to the decision is that 22% of the young Bugis Makassar generation is more inclined towards modern wedding decoration styles, which are considered trendier and are influenced by various social media and other digital platforms that have significantly impacted the lifestyles of many Bugis Makassar youths. This sentiment was expressed by one of the respondents in an open-ended question, as follows:

> "My younger sister (a girl) wants her wedding event to be like the ones on Instagram."
> "It's better to hire a wedding organizer's services, which also include event venue decoration and it's beautiful."

In general, most of the respondents are aware of the Walasuji tradition, and their families have previously organized it. However, there are also some respondents who are unaware of this tradition and have no intention of organizing it due to various factors. It can be concluded that these factors include both internal and external elements within the community, influenced by changes in the surrounding environment and the evolution of the times. These factors reflect a shift in the priorities of the current generation of young Bugis Makassar regarding the Walasuji tradition, moving from a "duty or habit" to "not obligatory." However, it's important to note that the Walasuji tradition is not just about a wedding decoration gate; it holds important values during the process of creating the Baruga Walasuji, such as educational and positive belief values. Today, due to the discontinuation of the practice of making Baruga Walasuji, there is an impact on the hindered transfer of knowledge and the wisdom of these values to the younger generation.

Similar ideas are also presented by (Sudirman, et al. 2019; Ramadan, 2019), indicating that many young Bugis Makassar individuals today misunderstand the true essence of the Walasuji tradition. Walasuji, which should encompass ideas, concepts, philosophies, values, and artifacts, is currently perceived by young people merely as the "Sulappa Eppa" ornament. Sulappa Eppa is a bamboo embroidery motif that adorns the Baruga Walasuji, typically in a diamond-shaped pattern. Sulappa Eppa holds its own significance as a symbol of the four mystical elements that shape the universe: wind, fire, water, and earth (Triadi and Petsy, 2022; Hasbi, 2021). This symbol represents the written embodiment of the Bugis Makassar community in ancient times, describing life as a wise message for their younger generations. Consequently, this symbol is incorporated as a motif throughout the Baruga Walasuji to serve as a reminder of life's teachings for their young people about to get married. However, it is this very symbol that the current generation perceives as "Walasuji" due to changing societal behaviors during wedding ceremonies. As a result, Walasuji ultimately lives on merely as a symbol, devoid of its inherent values and meanings.

From this discussion, it can be concluded that although the Walasuji tradition in wedding ceremonies has become less common, the term "Walasuji" remains as a symbol of the

ethnic identity of the Bugis Makassar community. The profound values behind the Walasuji tradition seem to have been left behind, making the term "Walasuji" merely a visual symbol. This underpins the motivation for conducting this research, particularly in response to the study conducted by (Carles et al. 2021) which emphasizes that the Walasuji tradition holds several noble values worth preserving. Therefore, the aim of this research is to explore and rekindle the forgotten meanings and values of the Walasuji tradition.

Walasuji's Cultural Structure

In this section, we will discuss the structure of the Walasuji tradition, both in its ideal form and its comparison to its shifted current state, encompassing its physical manifestations, community behaviors, as well as the meanings and values it holds. This comparison can be made by examining the intervening factors analyzed based on previous related work, as well as data obtained through observation, literature, and validated interviews using data source triangulation.

Intervention factors themselves refer to all the factors that interrupt the whole structure or certain parts of the culture (Allen, 2022; Ciptandi, 2020;). These factors can be identified by analyzing the gap between the current state of the tradition and its ideal state. In the case of the Walasuji tradition, based on previous related work data, it can be seen that there are two main intervention factors contributing to the decreasing visibility of the Walasuji tradition.

Firstly, there is the issue of bamboo, which has become increasingly inaccessible to the community, despite being the primary material for crafting Walasuji artifacts. Secondly, there is the factor of changing lifestyles and characteristics of today's Bugis Makassar youth. Based on interviews with 100 representative respondents from the Bugis Makassar youth in Pinrang and Barru regencies, at least three main factors were identified as the reasons why people today do not engage in the Walasuji tradition: (1) Feeling it is not obligatory or not wanting the hassle; (2) Difficulty in obtaining/buying bamboo; and (3) Preference for modern wedding decorations.

"Outer" Layer of the Walasuji Tradition: The Baruga Walasuji Artefact & Sulappa Eppa Pattern

According to the Cultural Layers theory (Leong and Clark 2003), the outer layer comprises all tangible elements of culture or tradition, often referred to as artefacts. Traditional artefacts are physical objects closely associated with tradition, customs, or the culture of a particular group of people. They reflect cultural heritage and values passed down from generation to generation (Pabbajah, et al. 2021). These traditional artefacts are frequently used as symbols of a particular tradition or culture and typically encompass elements such as material, technique, form, dimensions, and aesthetics (Dong, 2022; Trauer, 2021). This traditional artifact based on the theory of innovation guiding the pyramid of tradition-based products (Ciptandi, 2025) is also described as one of the fundamental elements that influence the formation of traditional identity through sensory capture as an entry point to be recognized as something unique and distinctive. In line (Álvaro, 2024) also states that artifacts contain information that goes beyond their utilitarian function and is not only seen as physical objects but as the result of interactions between humans and objects, which reflect cultural practices, values, and social structures.

In the Walasuji tradition, there are tangible artefacts, namely the bamboo gate known as the Baruga Walasuji and the woven motif called Sulappa Eppa. The Baruga Walasuji resembles a gateway at the front of a traditional stilt house in the Bugis Makassar com-

munity, symbolizing that this wedding marks the gateway to a new phase of life (Inaya, 2021). The distinctive motif, shaped like a diamond, adorns the entire surface of the Baruga. This motif is created by weaving bamboo diagonally, forming empty spaces resembling the shape of a diamond. Different arrangements of the Baruga motif are seen at each wedding ceremony, reflecting the social status of the marrying families, which relates to the cosmological concept of the Bugis Makassar community, recognizing three layers of the world: upper (God), middle (the universe), and lower (life after death) (Saleh, 2023; Tenriwaru, et al. 2021). The detailed form and size of the Baruga also vary according to the preferences of the marrying families and the conditions of the couple's residence (see Figure 4).

The top component of Baruga Walasuji is in the form of a roof with a triangular base shape

The bottom component of Baruga Walasuji consist of pillars decorated with the Sulappa Eppa motif
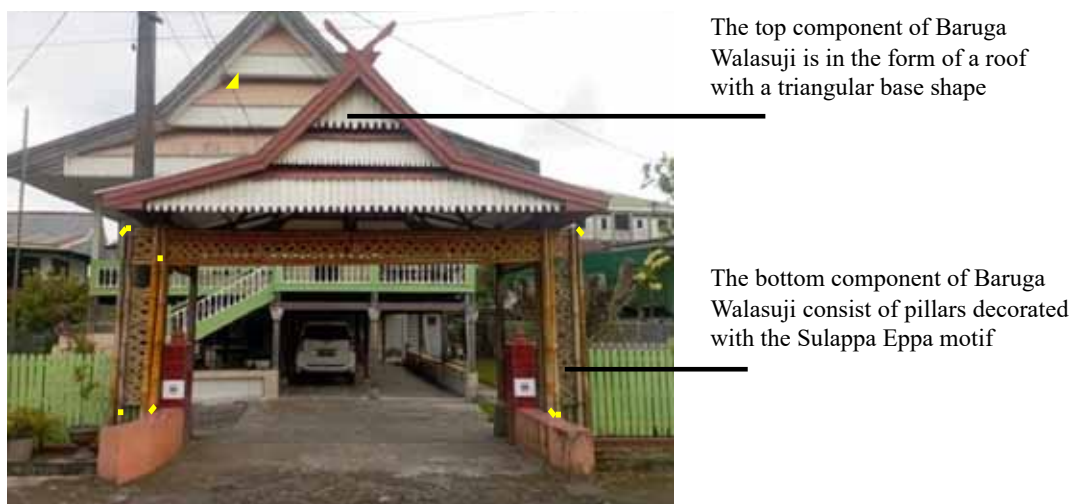
Figure 4. The shape of "Baruga" Walasuji.

Based on interviews with elder figures (Bareng, 2023), the completed Baruga Walasuji is then installed at the entrance gate of the bride's house. In the past, ideally, the Baruga should have been installed 2-4 weeks before the event. However, nowadays, people prefer to install it only 1 week before the wedding. This Baruga serves as a marker indicating that a wedding ceremony will take place at that house. It also signals to passersby to behave appropriately when passing by the house, such as not making noise or causing disturbances (Inaya, 2021). The construction of the Baruga Walasuji, as explained by the elder Bareng, must be done through a communal effort involving a group of people, especially young individuals. The primary material used is bamboo, specifically old, straight, and green bamboo, known as "mallise" (Adam, 2022). Bamboo is the primary building material for the Baruga Walasuji, as it has been for many traditional practices in Indonesia, serving various daily purposes such as kitchen tools, weapons, house construction, and traditional games (Sari, et al. 2022; Fauziyah, et al. 2022).

The Sulappa Eppa motif (see Figure 5) visually consists of diagonal bamboo strips woven into the walls of the Baruga, filling the spaces between the structural posts. In the context of artefacts, there are only two types of Sulappa Eppa weaving: those made using two layers of bamboo strips and those made using three layers of bamboo strips. These two weaving styles are associated with the social status of the marrying families, with two layers representing non-aristocratic families and three layers representing aristocratic families (Saleh, 2023).
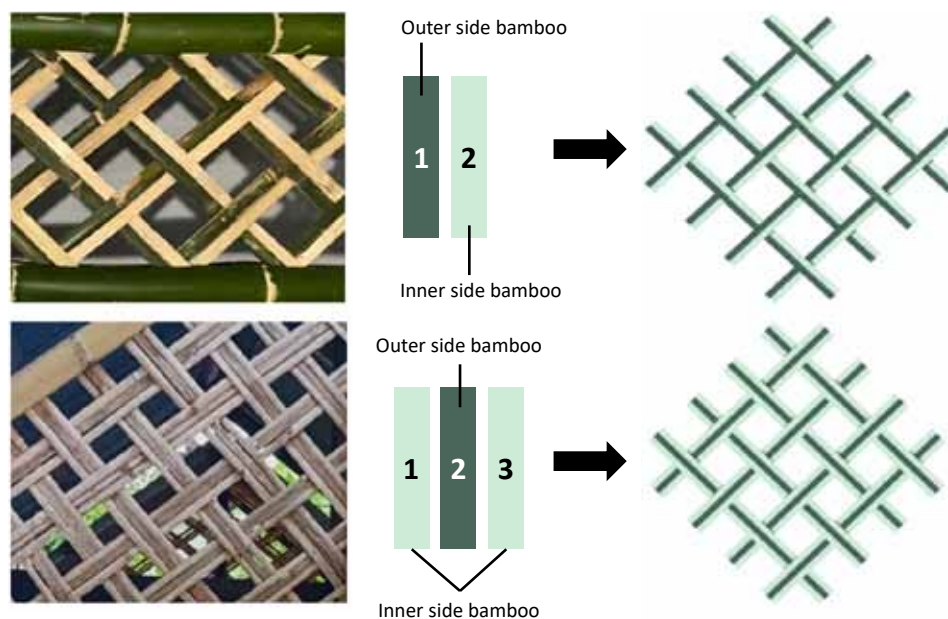
Figure 5. (Top) Two-plies pattern, (Bottom) Three-plies pattern.

"Mid" Layer of Walasuji Tradition: Building Process of Baruga Walasuji

The second layer, or the middle layer, in the theory of the three cultural layers pertains to the realm of behavior or customs practiced by the community in the tradition. Based on the theory of Cultural Behaviorism (Krieg, 2020), it is stated that the community practices behavior or customs because it is regulated by local culture, where culture is considered a control system for behavior through norms, punishments, and rewards. According to (Ciptandi & Arumsari, 2024), this cultural behavior is also said to be a pattern of behavior inherited because it has been carried out socially for a long time. So, referring to the explanation of these theories, there are several behaviors formed during the process of constructing the Baruga Walasuji. According to interviews with elder figures (Bareng, 2023), it was stated that the making of the Baruga Walasuji must be a collective effort. Therefore, in the past, the Walasuji was considered invalid if it was carried out by a small number of people. It had to be done collectively, following the principle of "assitulung-tulungeng," which means mutual assistance (involving many people). The process of making it consists of several stages, generally as follows:

1. Bamboo Selection

The community's knowledge about the suitable type of bamboo for Walasuji, which is old and thick (mallise) with a bluish-green hue (see Figure 6), has reached a deep level of understanding. This knowledge allows them to select bamboo by visual inspection alone, demonstrating a confident and spontaneous behavior. Additionally, their understanding of bamboo as a valuable and essential material for daily life has shaped their attitudes and behaviors towards preserving bamboo. However, in today's context, there has been a shift in attitudes and behaviors regarding this, with a dwindling inclination to care for and preserve bamboo. This change aligns with the decreasing interest and motivation to use Walasuji. Consequently, there has been a change in behavior where people who want to build Walasuji now need to purchase bamboo from suppliers because bamboo groves are no longer as abundant as they once were.

Figure 6. Bamboo Selection.

2. Bamboo Processing

After the bamboo has been selected, it is then processed collectively with simultaneous task distribution. First, the bamboo is cut into pieces according to the desired size of the Baruga, which is adjusted to the size of the gate and fence of the family's house or the request of the marrying families. Typically, the height of the Baruga will reach about 3 meters with a width of around 3 meters. Generally, the cut bamboo pieces will be grouped into several types, such as for the posts, roof, and specifically for the weaving of the Sulappa Eppa motif. Long bamboo sections are used for the posts and structural components, while the bamboo strips are used for weaving Sulappa Eppa. Almost no part of the bamboo is wasted (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Bamboo processing cut into smaller pieces and grouped.

3. Baruga Assembly (assembling)

In this stage, the creation of the Baruga is divided into several parts: the installation of the structural posts of the Baruga, the weaving of the Baruga walls, and the installation of the Baruga walls and roof (see Figure 8). In the past, the structural components of the Baruga were secured using bamboo pegs. In modern times, some also use rattan, ropes, and nails. The process of weaving the Baruga walls involves sandwiching bamboo between the two sides of the posts. As for the roof, the original Baruga should ideally use Nipa leaves. In today's era, since Nipa leaves are rarely found, residents have replaced the roof with sheets of zinc or spandex (a type of roof made from a combination of aluminum and zinc) to make it more practical and durable, ensuring it can be reused for other events.

Figure 8. (Left) Making the structural posts of the Baruga, (Center) Weaving the Baruga walls, (Right) Installation of the Baruga roof use Nipa leaves.

Ideally, the entire process of creating the Baruga Walasuji is carried out by following the guidance of the elders and is performed collectively and in synergy by skilled artisans. This fosters a community behavior of obedience and compliance with the instructions of leaders and encourages cooperation in achieving a common goal, known in their terms as "gotong royong ." The elders, considered the most knowledgeable and wise, guide the construction process of the Walasuji while imparting various techniques and insights to the residents involved in the construction, especially to the young who are inexperienced in Walasuji-making. This cultivates a behavior of teaching tradition that naturally forms, allowing knowledge and skills to be passed down through generations. Additionally, during the construction process, all residents assisting communicate and coordinate effectively to ensure the Walasuji is completed according to the plan. Thus, the moment of building the Baruga Walasuji becomes an interaction among the community members and a means for transferring knowledge and insights about the Walasuji tradition.

However, with the decreasing demand for building Baruga Walasuji, this activity has become increasingly rare. Consequently, when there is a need to construct Baruga Walasuji today, it is no longer done by the community through voluntary mutual assistance but rather by seeking the services of commercial providers. This is why many families of brides and grooms are reluctant to build a Baruga Walasuji because they do not only have to pur-

chase bamboo but also pay craftsmen for their labor. This phenomenon has led to a shift in the unique values of Walasuji, such as the absence of voluntary mutual assistance and the breakdown of communication among community members due to their exclusion from the construction of the Baruga. This can be summarized as causing a change in how the community treats the Walasuji tradition and the loss of its social values.

"Inner" Level of Walasuji Tradition: Meaning and Values
The inner level of culture is intangible in the form of non-material culture. According to (Yan, 2023), the principle of nonmaterial culture theory is that it is a cultural element that cannot be seen or touched physically but is very important in forming society's identity, social structure, and behavior. These elements include values, beliefs, norms, language, religion, and symbols community groups use. According to (Tauschek, 2011), these principles also focus on immaterial aspects that, although they cannot be seen or touched, have a great influence on the community because they are the essence of a group's identity. According to the explanation of the theory, Baruga Walasuji takes the form of a large gate and carries specific meanings and values, including:

1. The meaning of the name Walasuji and Baruga Walasuji in wedding ceremonies. Walasuji originates from the Lontara language (the regional language of the Bugis Makassar ethnic group) and signifies "protector" or "fence" (wala) for daughters or young women (suji). This is why the physical representation of this tradition takes the form of a large gate (Inaya, 2021). In other words, Walasuji means "protector of the daughter" (Bugis girls who are getting married). This demonstrates the Bugis Makassar community's deep respect for the role of women (Syarifah, 2010). According to an elder (Bareng, 2023), the name Walasuji also carries the meaning of the sanctity of the place where the Walasuji is placed. This implies that the location where the wedding ceremony takes place, along with the people inside it, must be free from behaviors prohibited by religion or the government. Based on this, it can be concluded that Baruga Walasuji, besides serving as a marker for the wedding ceremony, also holds values of respect and protection for the sacred nature of the event (Adam, 2022; Inaya, 2021).

2. The Meaning of Sulappa Eppa on the walls of Walasuji.
The term Sulappa Eppa originates from the Lontara language and refers to the diamond-shaped pattern (see Figure 9), which the Bugis Makassar community believes to be a mystical symbol representing the universe. The philosophical symbol of Sulappa Eppa itself comes from the Bugis alphabet system, which used to be written on lontar leaves. The symbol of the letter is ◊ / s / = sa, which means // = eswseua or 'one.' This symbol holds cosmological meanings such as God, humans, the sky, and the earth (Mahbud, 2008; Artiningrum, et al. 2019). This meaning is interpreted by Bugis-Makassar people to establish a social status within the community with the aim of maintaining the principles of balance in the upper, middle, and lower realms of the world. In a more concrete sense, it signifies the responsibility of humans to preserve local wisdom and maintain harmony in its governance.
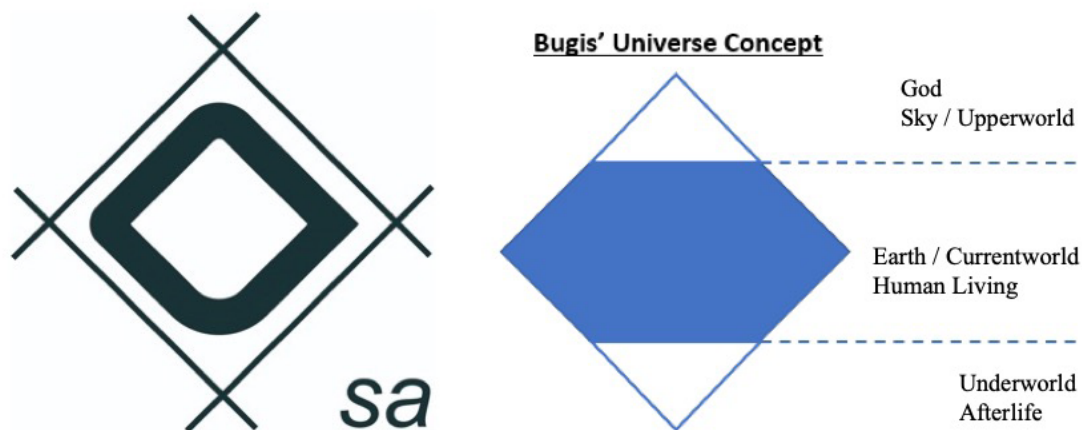
Figure 9. The concept of the universe in the symbol "Sulappa Eppa."

According to the perspective of the elder (Bareng, 2023), this concept signifies the current position in our lives, where there is "God" above, and there is the realm of death below. Meanwhile, according to the elder (Hasna, 2023), this concept holds religious significance, as the Bugis community believes in the existence of the One God (the uppermost point of the diamond), humans live in the middle realm (the blue area in Figure 8, right), and there is an awareness of the existence of the "lower realm" (the bottom point of the diamond), which is the realm that humans will enter after death. This concept forms the belief system of the Bugis community. The woven motif of sulappa eppa on the walls of Baruga Walasuji signifies this concept of life, which must be remembered by both the bride and groom and all the guests attending the wedding ceremony.

3. The significance of bamboo material as the primary material in Walasuji.
Based on interviews with elders (Bareng, 2023; Hasna, 2023) and studies (Adam, 2022), bamboo was chosen not only because it was abundant in Makassar but also because bamboo carries the philosophy of the goodness of life. In the past, bamboo was a plentiful natural resource in South Sulawesi. People used bamboo as tools, kitchen utensils, construction material for houses, and traditional games, so bamboo had a wide range of benefits for humans. Therefore, young Bugis people were expected to emulate bamboo's way of life, which provided benefits to the surrounding community.

4. The meaning of the Baruga Walasuji making process.
According to interviews with elders (Bareng, 2023; Hasna, 2023), Ideally, making Baruga Walasuji cannot be done alone, but it has to involve many people, emphasizing the values of mutual cooperation and hard work. During the process of creating it, there's a transfer of wisdom and knowledge that fosters good communication among the participants. This moment teaches not just technical skills but is also linked to the concept of the Sulappa Eppa symbol, signifying the awareness of the Bugis Makassar community about doing good deeds on Earth as instructed by God, in hopes of receiving blessings in the afterlife.

Based on all the explanations about the Walasuji tradition and the intervention factors that have caused transformations in the tradition, the overall structure of the Walasuji tradition can be depicted as shown in Figure 10 below.

Outer	Baruga				Sulappa Eppa		
Artefact	**Walasuji**				**Pattern**		
Middle **Behavior**	Making process: Teaching character values and knowledge transfer	Bamboo material-Goodlife philosophy	Gate form: Guardian of woman and family philosophy	Wedding ceremony (event)	2 plies pattern: Higher class family symbol	3 plies pattern: Higher class family symbol	Rhobus form: Bugis life pholosophy
Inner **Meaning and Value**	Mutual cooperation, hardwork, communicativeness	Usefull	Protection	Honor	Social		Religious

The tradition still exists at the outer level but has been disconnected from the process of teaching tradition as a means of transferring knowledge and skills of the tradition to the next generation.

Intervention	The change in the attitude and mindset of the practical modern society.	Limitations in the availability of raw materials (bamboo).	The influence of trends in shaping the behavior and preferences of society.

Figure 10. The Structure of Walasuji Tradition and the Form of Transformation.

It can be concluded that the cultural layer structure of the Walasuji tradition at the Inner layer consists of deeply internalized values and beliefs, which are then expressed through the attitudes/behaviors of the community at the Middle layer and manifested in the form of artifacts at the Outer Layer. In general, there are two main artifacts in this tradition, namely the large gate called "Baruga" and the weaving on the Baruga called Sulappa Eppa. It can also be said that each artifact is manifested from different community behaviors, and, of course, they originate from different values as well. In the process of making Baruga Walasuji, there are at least three noble values: cooperation (gotong royong), hard work, and communicativeness, which further explain the teaching process of the tradition. Bamboo, the main material, represents the idea of usefulness and making the most of what is available in the surroundings. The gate's form symbolizes protection and respect, primarily used as a marker for families holding wedding ceremonies. Meanwhile, the type of weaving called sulappa eppa signifies social status, and the diamond shape of the weaving serves as a decorative element that adds an aesthetic touch, while also symbolizing the ideology of divinity believed by the Bugis Makassar community.

In addition to the structure of the Walasuji tradition, it can be observed that today there are three main intervention factors that affect the condition of the Walasuji tradition: a shift in the practical attitudes and mentality of society, a shortage of bamboo as raw material, and changes in people's preferences due to trends. Ultimately, these factors have led to the continuation of the tradition in the form of making Baruga Walasuji and applying the Sulappa Eppa weaving pattern, but only at the outer/artifact level. At the behavioral level, values like "gotong royong" or cooperation have disappeared, and at the inner level, the philosophical meanings have also been lost.

Conclusion

There are some points that can be concluded regarding the expression of the Walasuji tradition among the Bugis Makassar community today include:

1. The Walasuji tradition embodies several noble values for the Bugis Makassar youth, which are conveyed during wedding ceremonies. These values are expressed through the community's actions in the tradition, resulting in artifacts such as the Baruga Walasuji with Sulappa Eppa weavings. These values include Cooperation, Hard work, Communicativeness, Usefulness, Protection, Respect, Social, and Religiousness.

2. There are behaviors in the middle layer of the Walasuji tradition's cultural structure, which constitute acts of teaching, particularly in the process of making the Baruga Walasuji. This behavior carries the most value among other behaviors and serves as a key element in transferring knowledge of the Walasuji tradition to the next generation. These attitudes act as a crucial bridge in preserving the tradition from one generation to another.

3. Three intervention factors have led to the declining practice of the Walasuji tradition, namely: (1) Changing attitudes and practical mentality of modern society, (2) Difficulty in obtaining/buying bamboo, and (3) Preference for modern wedding decorations. These factors clearly show the Walasuji tradition is no longer fully appreciated. The most influential thing is that the majority believe that the Walasuji tradition at wedding ceremonies is not considered mandatory and generally indicates that the values contained in Walasuji have been forgotten. So, the practice of making it is currently no longer easy to find, without anyone feeling that it needs to get any consequences.

4. There is a tradition behavior that actually supports the difficulty of carrying out the Walasuji tradition when facing the aforementioned intervention factors, namely the Wedding Moment. This is an eventual moment for every individual and is not something that occurs frequently, which can motivate someone to do things that are important and considered sacred.

5. There is a traditional behavior that no longer supports the Walasuji tradition when facing the aforementioned intervention factors, namely the type of Sulappa Eppa weaving that symbolizes social status. In the current condition, this has categorized society into castes, leading to the perception that non-noble individuals do not feel obliged to create Walasuji.

6. The Walasuji tradition cannot be allowed to vanish as it carries several valuable character education values to be taught to the younger generation. However, the changing times have altered the lifestyle of the community, requiring the adaptation of the Walasuji tradition to endure. By analyzing the cultural structure and intervention factors in the Walasuji tradition, it is hoped that this will aid cultural enthusiasts, researchers, or designers in their efforts to transform the Walasuji tradition to suit the contemporary context.

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Ancient Service Systems in Historic Houses and Their

Contribution to Sustainable Urban Development: The Case of Architect Sinan's House

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Abstract

The service systems of historic buildings, namely, heating, ventilation, cooling, lighting, and drainage play a critical role in the life cycle of buildings and sustainable urban development to preserve traditional knowledge systems. Therefore, a detailed investigation is required before, during, and after any preservation activity to ensure the historic integrity. Hence, this research aims to identify, investigate, and research the original service systems of a historic building, namely, the Architect Sinan's house in Ağırnas, Türkiye, to reveal and sustain these original passive survivability details to future generations and to learn from these details in present constructions. Main methods were site analysis, literature, archival research, and oral interviews. The findings showed that the case study building preserved most of its service systems, especially the lighting, ventilation, and heating details, but with minor or major destruction and deterioration. In conclusion, the study addressed a critical conservation problem in historic buildings, focusing particularly on original service systems of a case study building, and if not clearly identified, these details and traditional knowledge systems are prone to be lost.

Keywords: *Traditional Knowledge, Service Systems, Sustainability, Sinan's House, Ağırnas, Urban Development, Turkey, Türkiye*

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Introduction

Historic buildings are important architectural entities for the context of the cities in which they are located, but are also responsible for the transfer of knowledge about historic building systems and architectural construction details. Among them, building service systems, including heating, ventilation, cooling, lighting, roof drainage, and waste and clean water systems, are of great importance to make them functional, comfortable, efficient, and safe. Ancient building service systems, their application methods, materials, techniques, details, and working practices are considered part of traditional knowledge systems (TKS), a new term introduced by the International Centre for the Study of Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) for the preservation and management of cultural heritage (ICCROM, 2020). TKS were internationally recognized in the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992 (United Nations-UN, 1992) and were first mentioned in the operational guidelines of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 2005 (UNESCO, 2021). Since then, they have become an important part of the management of World Heritage sites. TKS are proven, dynamic processes that represent traditional information, skills, knowledge, innovations, practices, and technologies that can provide and complement scientific solutions for contemporary life (ICCROM, 2020; United Nations-UN, 1992).

Similarly, ancient building service systems are indigenous traditional construction techniques that ensure the longevity of historic buildings. This research discusses the implementation of these systems in a historic house case in Ağırnas, Kayseri. The context of the study is therefore to demonstrate the relationship between sustainable urban development and service systems in historic house buildings using a case study approach. The aim is to demonstrate the contribution of ancient service systems to sustainable urban development, to reveal natural construction solutions and passive survival means of the period, and to ensure their proper documentation and protection. In this way, it will be possible to pass this knowledge on to future generations and contribute to its preservation, as there is a direct link between sustainable urban development, built heritage and historical preservation (Al-Alawi et. al., 2022; Yawer et. al., 2023). Teklemariam (2024) and Zerrudo (2008) summarize this link as "awareness, appreciation, protection and utilization" and suggest that heritage preservation is an asset for urban revitalization that brings social and economic benefits, including the preservation of service systems. HaghighatBin et. al. (2024) further argue that the preservation of historical urban sites also contributes to the sustainability of collective memory, such that "the preservation of physical elements are the anchors of historical identity." Nursanty and Susilowati (2023) use the example of the village of Cirebon in Indonesia to show the importance of preserving a sense of place, which in turn supports the local environment and the development of a sustainable identity. In the same way, Karimi et. al. (2022) state that historic buildings have inherently sustainable properties. They keep collective memories alive and strengthen collective solidarity to achieve social, economic, and environmental sustainability. As Cudicio and Gardella (2024) stated, it should also be kept in mind that built urban heritage has both tangible and intangible values and that its preservation must protect both aspects for a sustainable future and collective identity. At the local level, heritage preservation can promote social and cultural sustainability by supporting cultural continuity and preserving the various traditional knowledge systems (Avrami, 2016). Similarly, the old service systems of historical buildings are part of the historical identity and cultural knowledge of the period in which they were built, so it is important to document and preserve them.

In Türkiye, there are few studies on historic building service systems, and the existing ones generally focus on monumental buildings such as historic hospitals /dar al-shifa, baths/ hammams, and historic houses in a limited number of cases (Ankaralıgil and Disli, 2021; Bilsel et al., 2002; Disli, 2018; Disli, 2014; Disli and Çelik, 2016; Disli and Özcan, 2016; Disli et al., 2019; Özcan and Disli, 2014; Disli and Atan, 2023; Disli and Ankaralıgil, 2023; Disli et. al., 2023; Çalıskan and Disli, 2022; Disli and Mankır, 2021). However, according to the official statistical data of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Turkish Republic, among the total immovable cultural heritage in Türkiye (total number 127,287, as of the end of 2024), civic architecture (total number 78,167, as of the end of 2024), which mostly consists of historic houses, outweighs the other types of historic buildings (Turkish Republic Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2025). Therefore, it is important to first introduce and make known the building service systems, which are mostly tiny architectural details and elements hidden in the walls, under the floors, or above the roofs of historic houses, and then raise awareness of the need to protect these details in any interventions. In addition, awareness of these systems can inspire contemporary constructions to develop passive solutions for heating, cooling, ventilation, and drainage and even sustainable healthy environments with their enlarged use in construction sector.

In this study, the fifteenth-century house of the Great Sinan, the Ottoman-era architect (1479-1588), the most famous of all Ottoman architects, in Agırnas in the Koramaz Valley was chosen as a case study. This is because many traditional indigenous techniques of the building, especially the service systems/passive means of survival, architectural construction details, and character-defining features have survived and can still be seen today. The building can be visited upon request, making it easy to examine as part of field studies. It is also associated with the ancient underground rock-cut city in the region. Although there are few studies on the traditional houses of Agırnas (Atak, 2009; Atak and Çagdas, 2015), the settlement has been evaluated in terms of its sustainability and traditional structure (Özbudak and Önal, 2019). The region has been intensely identified with the concept of Sinan's home and most research on the area has focused on this topic (Bilsel et al., 2002). Unlike the existing literature, this study discussed the architect Sinan's house in terms of all its ancient service/functional/utility systems, including heating, cooling, cleaning and sewage systems, lighting, ventilation, storage, and roof drainage, and examined their relationships. In this way, the study will provide a new perspective for understanding ancient service systems and offer guidance for contemporary architecture. Moreover, the study contributed to understanding the original service systems in Agırnas traditional residential area through a well-preserved case study. The study only covers the building currently used as a memorial museum on plots No. 806 and plot No. 3, but not the other interconnected buildings on the adjacent plots. The survey was based on field visits conducted five times in November and December 2020, January and May 2021, and in 2011. Oral interviews with Agırnas residents, archival research at the Conservation Board and university archives, and literature survey on traditional Agırnas houses and the case study building were the other methods used during the study. In this study, firstly, the historic service systems and the traditional architectural construction details/elements/solutions serving for heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting, waste and clean water systems, and roof drainage were examined in detail for their original location, material, and technology in both the stone masonry section (SMS) and the ancient rock-cut section (RCS) of the house. They were then divided into natural and direct supply systems, followed by an assessment of the reliability level of the information sources, especially those that could not be currently observed in situ.

The House of the Architect Sinan and Historical Context of the Agırnas Region

The building is located in the Agırnas district, on Oztas Street, on plot no. 806 and plot no. 3, in Melikgazi, Kayseri (Figure 1, Figure 2). The Kayseri Monument Protection Authority for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets registered the building as a cultural asset on September 17, 1996 (Kayseri Governorship, 2009). Draft drawings of the building were prepared in 2001 under the supervision of Kayseri, Erciyes University and the architect Nüvit Bayar completed the comprehensive projects including the measured drawings, restitution, and restoration projects in 2004 (Archives of Nüvit Bayar, 2004). The restoration was completed in 2008 and opened as a Memory House Museum. During this restoration work, some underground parts of the house were cleaned, remodelled, and opened for visits. The house, designed by the Architect Sinan, had an 'L'-shaped floor plan and was originally single-story. However, over time, it became a three-story building at the front, with more floors gradually added. Today, only the rear part of the building is one-story, and the original part is only on the first floor. The second floor was added in 1934 and the third floor in 1961 (Yaslıca and Çalısır , 2002). Since it was built over the rock-cut cave of the ancient underground city, the extension of the Koramaz Valley, it consists of two parts: a stone masonry building in the upper part and a former rock-cut cave below this unit. According to the survey of locals, the rock-cut part of the house is said to extend to the main church square of Agırnas district, which is 400-500 m long, and used as a gate and underground passage for escape during times of conflict (Yaslıca and Çalısır, 2002).

Figure 1. Location of the site of the house (shown in red color) of the Great Sinan, the architect, in Agırnas, Kayseri (Source: Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality Geographical Information System, 2025).

The last restoration works of the house, carried out in 2006-2008, also support this argument. It is believed that the part carved into the rock under the Great Sinan's House is transverse to the other houses in the area, forming an intricate underground city under the Agırnas region (Yamaç and Tok, 2015). In time, however, the owners of the houses closed the gates and connecting tunnels to prevent underground access to their homes (Anonymous, 2017). At present, the carved part under the house consists of four different sections, but it is believed that they were originally a single room, and given the round stone doors between these sections, it is also believed that the carved part could have been used for defensive purposes at least at one time (Anonymous, 2017). The original part of the stone masonry has thick walls of cut volcanic stone and a 0,25-0,30m thick ceiling supported by wooden posts and beams from juniper trees. The rear part of this section has an earthen roof with a 0,50-0,60m thick earthen floor, and the remaining parts have flat roofs.

Figure 2. General photos of the house of the Great Sinan. (Source: Photos by authors).

Agırnas, where the case study building is located, is in the province of Kayseri in Central Anatolia. The Koramaz Valley, which dates back to 2000 BC, has been included in the UNESCO Tentative List of World Heritage for 2020 due to its outstanding underground cities among residential areas, cave churches, dovecotes, and columbaria (UNESCO, 2022). The Koramaz valley is 16km long and extends from Küçük Bürüngüz up to Ispidin. It is the longest valley in Kayseri and even in the whole Cappadocia region. The valley includes seven villages with cliff dwellings, rock-carved structures, and underground cities (Yamaç, 2017). Agırnas means 'The Land of Altars' in the Luwi language of the Hittites and 'Serious Man' in the Arabic language (ÇEKÜL, 2015). The stratified settlement has traces of cultural heritage (i.e., underground cities, dwellings carved into rocks, and rock tombs) from various periods, including the Hittite, Cappadocian, Byzantine, Seljuk, and Ottoman civilizations, and has an interwoven formation of primitive cave settlements and traditional houses, most of which date to the second half of the nineteenth century (Bilsel et al., 2002). Historically, Agırnas was a region where both Muslim and non-Muslim communities lived together, so much so that, according to an archival register from 1500 AD, almost 95% of the inhabitants in Agırnas were non-Muslims (Koç, 2012). Agırnas and its surroundings are covered with red and white volcanic tufa, which have a rather soft texture and are therefore suitable for carving. As a result, there are many underground cities carved into the rock, churches, dovecotes, and rock tombs in the city. The underground settlements, which account for about 80% of the region, were expanded over time and used mainly between the first and thirteenth centuries AD (ÇEKÜL, 2005; Kayseri Governorship, 2011).

Historic Functional Systems in the House of the Architect Sinan
In the house of Great Architect Sinan, the functional systems have been examined and explained in detail under five different headings.

Traditional Heating Techniques and Tools in the Case Study Building
The case study building is located in a region where winters are cold and severe and summers are quite hot. Therefore, the outdoor temperature directly affects indoor conditions and user comfort, requiring appropriate solutions compatible with the regional climate. The part of the house carved in rock meets this requirement to a great extent so that it is warm in winter and cool in summer. The proper orientation of the living spaces, the window openings, and the local volcanic tuff material of the main walls in the upper part of the building also contributes to heating the spaces. The sun is the main source of natural heating in the upper parts of the house. Shallow or splayed window openings are used for this purpose. Furnaces and built-in fireplaces, on the other hand, were the direct heating elements located in different parts of the house. There were three types of heating devices: Tandoors for cooking and heating, built-in fireplaces with chimney pots in the rooms of the upper part for heating the rooms, and cast-iron furnaces for mining in the part of the house cut into the rock. The tandoor room, which opens onto the courtyard just outside the kitchen, was used during the day in summer as a semi-open extension of the kitchen for cooking. It was also used to heat the room and the body, especially at night. When it was used as a heater, a sliding cover made of metal or stone with a diameter of about 0,50-0,60m and a thickness of 0,10m, called duvak in the local language, covered its top

(Figure 3). A thick blanket was then spread over this cover, and people sat around the edge, using the indirect heat of the remaining embers (Cömert, 2005). In the case study house, a lantern-like roof/tüteklikli örtü covers this space above (Figure 3). In the traditional houses of Kayseri, braziers were another means of indirect heating. They were prepared either with pieces from the fire that turned into a fire from the oven or with charcoal that was specially prepared and burned in the courtyard. Then they were generally placed in the center to heat the living quarters. In some other cases, similar to the night use of tandoors, a wooden table was placed over the braziers and covered with a thick blanket so that users could warm their bodies. This mechanism is called isgembi (Imamoglu, 1992). Therefore, it is clear that in the building, the priority was to heat the body rather than the entire room in an effective manner, as in a traditional Anatolian house (Küçükerman, 1995). In the part of the house carved into the rock, there are casting furnaces with ash removal drains, which were used for mining purposes (Cömert, 2005). Therefore, it is assumed that this part might be used as an iron foundry (Anonymous, 2017). In the living rooms of the masonry part, there are also built-in furnaces located along the walls, with chimney extensions at the roof. The ovens, on the other hand, are located in the part of the house that is carved in stone, on the floor level, and are bordered with stone pieces. They were used either for heating the rooms or mainly for cooking. A ventilation hole can also be seen on the top cover, directly above these ovens (Figure 4, Figure 5). Another indirect source of heat for the rooms above the carved stables was the animals, so the small holes in the stone arches used to tether the animals support the animal husbandry in the rock-cut part of the building (Figure 6).

Figure 3. Tandoor pits (left & center) with their ash-discharge holes and stone sliding cover *(duvak)* & wooden lantern-roof/*tüteklikli örtü*. (right) Above the tandoor room in the stone masonry section. (Source: Photos by author).

Figure 4. Views of the tandoor (top left) and the oven (top center) with their ventilation holes (top right & lower left) on the ceiling and stone arches with small holes for tethering the animals, in the carved rock-carved (lower right). (Source: Photo by authors).

Figure 5. Built-in fireplaces (left) and interior views of their chimney extensions (right). (Source: Photos by authors).

Direct and indirect heating devices/elements	Natural heating and auxiliary elements
* Built-in furnaces and their chimney extensions *** Casting furnaces for mining** *** Ovens for cooking and heating the space/body** ***Tandoor for cooking** *** Tandoor for heating the space/body (*isgembi*)** *** Indirect heat gain from the animals in RCS**	*Sun, the orientation of spaces * Window openings *Construction materials (cut-stone, volcanic tuff, earth) * Construction techniques (rock carved spaces)

Figure 6. Main heating techniques/tools.

Waste and Clean Water Systems in Case Study Building

The information on waste and clean water systems is based largely on on-site surveys. In the case study building, wastewater was discharged through floor drains, open channels for surface water drainage, sewers, bathing areas, latrines, and washrooms. The surface slope in these areas was also the primary means of surface drainage. The original latrine of the building was located in the courtyard, but nothing remains of this unit except for some traces. In this courtyard, there are also traces of a pool, a well, and its channels that were connected to the main fountain of the area. There is also a stone basin of a fountain in the courtyard. The bathing room was built as a small niche, closed with a wooden door, inside the living area. In this small niche, there is a stone pedestal in the center where you can sit while bathing. A ceiling vent at the top ventilates this space (Figure 7). The original waste-water drain is no longer visible today. In another example, the bathing room opens to the main living area/hall/sofa and is separated from the sofa by wooden grilles. In this room is a *cag tası*, a rectangular or elliptical stone pedestal with small holes and drains, and/or in some cases with a raised central section used for bathing and ablution (Figure 7, Figure 8) (Çelebi, 2017).

In the building, there is also a sunken ablution space made of stone, located in the entrance area within the living area. The sewage is drained into the earth below with the help of the porous nature of the stone material. The central part of this washing stone is elevated, as in the bathing cabins, so that the splashing of the wastewater during washing does not disturb the users (Figure 8). In addition to these above-ground washing and bathing devices, there is another special solution for washing and cleaning facilities. In this case, the first step of the staircase connecting the ground floor with the upper floor was converted into a lavatory and ablution area. The drain is connected to the courtyard and is clearly visible on the facade of the building (Figure 9). There is also a lavatory on the wall of the cellar room behind the stairs. Its drain could not be discovered, but it could be hidden in the wall and located under the floor of the room. Kayseri was a region with a high potential for water sources throughout the centuries, but wells and cisterns were also used as alternative water sources both for providing clean water and for storing snow in winter, especially in the areas where water from rivers could not be used. Until recently, these alternative water sources could be observed in the courtyards of traditional houses in Kayseri (Karakus, 2000). Neither a well nor a cistern could be discovered in the case study building (Figure 10).

Figure 7. Left & 2nd from left, bathing areas. Third from left, lighting and ventilation shaft above the bathing area with its extension on the flat roof and (right) open gutters in the courtyard for surface drainage. (Source: Photos by authors).

Figure 8. Left, Ablution space with its stone base and cag tası for bathing and ablution purposes center & left. (Source: Photo by authors).

Figure 9. The staircase step also used as a sink and ablution space (a), and its drain in the wall (b-c) (Source: Photo by authors).

Wastewater system elements	Clean water system elements
*Latrine	*Ablution space and lavatories
*Surface drain on the ground	* Pool
*Open channels on the ground for the discharge of surface water	* Fountain
*Wastewater discharge channels inside the wall	* Clean water distribution channels
*Sunken ablution space and its stone base	
* Bathing cubicle	
* *Cağ taşı* for bathing and ablution	

Figure 10. Traditional waste and clean water system solutions.

Traditional Ventilation and Lighting Solutions and Techniques in Case Study Building

In the case study building, both natural solutions and artificial elements were used for ventilation and lighting of the rooms. During the day, the sun was the main source of light. After sunset, indirect sources of lighting such as oil lamps, candles, or candlesticks were used, as well as fire in the fireplaces/furnaces and ovens on winter nights. Window and door openings, as well as ceiling openings, were the main architectural solutions for letting natural light into living spaces. Their dimensions, shapes, and numbers vary depending on the characteristics and location of the rooms. On the ground floor of the stone masonry, intended mainly for service spaces, almost all the windows have the form of small embrasures/splayed openings. On the upper floors, on the other hand, there are large rectangular windows for ventilation and lighting in the living rooms. In the stone masonry part of the building, there are built-in cellars under the stone staircase for food/grain storage. For their ventilation, there are some small holes in the steps of the staircase or some ornamented openings in the walls of the cellar rooms (Figure 11). In the rock-cut part, the ceiling holes/openings were the main means of ventilation and lighting. There are also some small-decorated niches on the wall surfaces called *serbetlik* to place the artificial lighting elements such as candles, candlesticks, or oil lamps. In some examples, there are even small holes at the bottom of these niches to place and fix these artificial lighting elements. Small holes in the walls, called *tembel delikleri,* served the same purpose, but also to place small objects such as matches, kindling, and firelighters (Figure 12). The case study building also had a light well that was used for both lighting and ventilation of the bathing rooms. There are no mechanical systems to ventilate the building; instead, natural ventilation and lighting are provided through architectural construction solutions. Chimney extensions of the built-in stoves also contribute to the ventilation of the rooms, especially on hot summer days (Figure 13). The chimneys are made of stone with a three-layer conical cap. On four sides of the chimneys, there are small square openings on the top level, so that cross ventilation is possible and wind can be caught from all sides on hot summer days, reminiscent of the principle of operation of Iranian *badgirs* (see Figure 2). In addition, there is a lantern-like roof/*tüteklikli örtü* above the tandoor room to ventilate the space and dissipate smoke and odors from the food during the cooking process (see Figure 3). In this type of roof, wooden beams are placed diagonally on top of each other to form a kind of dome with a small opening (about 0,50m) at the very top for smoke dissipation and lighting of the room (Akın, 1991).

Figure 11. Ventilation holes on the walls and steps specially built for ventilation of cellar spaces. (Source: Photos by authors).

Figure 12. Left wall niches, called tembel delikleri and center & right serbetlik. (Source: Photo by authors).

Natural ventilation/lighting and auxiliary elements	Architectural solutions for artificial lighting devices
* **Window and door openings** * **Small embrasure/splayed openings** * **Ceiling holes/vents** * **Chimneys of the furnaces** * **Lighting shafts** * **Laternen roofs/*tüteklikli örtü* above the tandoor rooms**	*Şerbetlikler/ small-decorated niches on the wall surfaces to hold lighting devices *Tembel Delikleri/ small niches on the wall surfaces to put some small objects

Figure 13. Traditional waste and clean water system solutions.

Food/Wheat Storage Solutions

Due to the harsh climate and conditions in the region, it was necessary to store food for long-term use. Therefore, in the traditional houses of Kayseri, it was essential to find additional solutions for storage, such as cellars, underground depots, and terracotta vessels (Figure 14) (Kaya, 2020). In the case study building, there are also some practical solutions for food storage both in the rock-cut part and in the upper floors made of stone masonry, which vary according to the type and characteristics of the food to be stored. On the first floor of the masonry part, there is a cellar room for food storage. Inside the cellar, there are

two wheat storage units of different sizes, made of local volcanic tuff. This room is made of stone masonry with a wooden ceiling supported by wooden beams and posts (Figure 15). There are only small embrasures/splayed openings in the wall for ventilation. The floor of the cellar is covered with stones. Small niches on the walls of the cellar and the other living spaces, as well as under the lavatory, are the other storage options. Thanks to the cooling effect of the earth and the rock, the part of the house carved into the rock were mainly used over time as an underground storage room with special cellar solutions, including pits carved into the ground and terracotta jars of various sizes used to store food. In this area, there is a special storage solution called çardak in the local language (Figure 16). A staircase from the original masonry part of the house reaches this part. In the çardak storage technique, a small pit was dug into the earthen/stone soil and food was stored in these underground pits for long-term use. The upper part of the pit was closed with tight iron grates so that some kind of protection and ventilation was provided. Below the stone staircase, there were also closed cellars, which were used for storage purposes. Terracotta jars, either buried in the ground or standing on the surface, were the other portable storage containers.

Dovecotes, carved into the tufa, were also seen in the parts of the house carved into the rock. They have the shape of small holes about 0,25*0,25m in size on the rock surfaces and were used to collect and store pigeon manure. At the very top, there is a small hole called hazne çatısı through which the pigeons can enter. However, it was originally believed to be columbarium that was used to store the ashes and personal belongings of the dead (Figure 15) (Kaya, 2005). Pigeon lofts similar to dovecotes were built to support agricultural trade in Kayseri. By the mid-nineteenth century, Kayseri and the surrounding periphery were an important center for the trade of cehri plants, which were an important source of income for local people. Pigeon manure, collected from pigeon lofts or dovecotes, was an indispensable part of this trade, which ensured the efficient and rapid growth of the cehri (Büyükmıhçı, 2006).

Closed storage areas/devices	Open storage areas
*Cellars and stone storage units *Çardak (underground storage pits) *Cellars beneath the stairs * Terracotta jars	*Wall niches and the niches beneath the lavatory

Figure 14. Different storage solutions.

Figure 15. Left 2 pics, cellar room and storage room with connection passageway with the rock-cut areas and far right the pigeon lofts in the rock-cut area. (Source: Photos by authors).

Figure 16. A rectangular niche on the wall in the tandoor room (a) and food storage containers buried in the ground (b), called çardak in the local language, in a rock-carved part of the house. (Source: Photo by authors).

Roof Drainage Systems in Case Study Building

The building originally had a flat roof covered with a layer of earth, characteristic of traditional houses in Ağırnas in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Yaslıca and Çalışır, 2002). At present, however, most parts of the roof are covered with pebbles mixed with earth. The stone waterspouts located at certain intervals on the parapet level of the roof are the primary drainage elements used to drain rain and snow water accumulated on the roof surfaces (Figure 17). They protrude from the main walls at the parapet level and have a gutter in the center through which the water is drained directly to the street or courtyard. In this way, the main stonewalls of the building are protected from wetness and humidity on rainy days. Rain and snow water is directed to these water spouts made of volcanic tufa, through muddy surfaces formed in the earth layer of the roof, towards these drainage elements. The earth layer of the original earthen roof was compacted after the rainy and snowy days with *log tası*, a special type of oval stone with an iron handle. The waterspouts are used both as functional and decorative elements, some of them with special shapes. In some cases, the waterspouts do not protrude but are located on the same surface as the courtyard wall itself, and in another case, the waterspout is located directly above the fountain basin in the courtyard, serving a dual purpose (Figure 17). Parapet walls with copings sloping in two directions, stone cornices at the parapet level, and on the facades between floors are the other architectural elements of the building that serve to drain water and protect the wall surfaces (Figures 17-18).

Figure 17. Left 2 pics, roof waterspouts and center right courtyard walls to drain rainwater. (Source: Photos by authors).

Roof types	Roof/wall surface drainage/discharge elements
*Earthen Roof ***Flat roof**	*Waterspouts, * Roof slope * Parapet walls * Stone cornices at the eaves level * Stone cornices between the floors

Figure 18. Different roof types and roof drainage elements.

Discussion and Conclusion

The identification of functional systems and building elements preserved with the technology of the time in historic buildings and the protection of these systems/elements are important to ensure the sustainability of this cultural heritage, traditional building details, and especially traditional knowledge systems (TKS). In addition, it is important to better identify these original systems in traditional houses to understand and document these details and preserve them during conservation studies, as well as to learn the symbiotic relations with the old and modern technology for a better urban development. Therefore, the house of Great Architect Sinan has been chosen as the case study to discuss the set of service systems (heating, waste and clean water, lighting, ventilation, food storage, and roof drainage) in detail, because they are still present and mostly preserve their originality. The subject is important because it is a question of showing how the notions of comfort and well-being were treated by architects in the Middle Ages and what were architectural elements designed in historic buildings to fulfil this function. In addition, it aims to raise awareness of the service systems in this historic house, as they reveal traditional architectural solutions designed to provide maximum comfort at the time of construction under natural conditions. Their construction technology has been explained and the reliability level of the data obtained for these systems is shown in Figure 19. It should be noted that for the case study building, most of the data on the location, shape, dimensions, material, and details of the system elements came from the building itself. Oral information, literature searches, and comparative studies were the other sources of information.

The study shows that the bioclimatic design of comfortable houses is not a contemporary notion; but it has existed for several centuries and the solution used by the ancients are ingenious despite their apparent simplicity, especially in the choice of building materials, their implementation as well as the management of fluids and energies so the house is autonomous by the use of passive systems. In short, it is about building and living with the climate, accounting for the lifestyles and rhythms of the inhabitants who take advantage of favourable elements of the external environment while protecting themselves from the extreme elements. The example of the Architect Sinan's house, built over a rock-cut cave connected to the underground city in the Koramaz Valley, also shows that ancient building technology dates back to 2000 BC. and continued to evolve with new additions and alterations until the fifteenth century and then into the twentieth century. The capacity of domestic technology evolved from underground pits and ovens to built-in fireplaces and chimneys. For cooking and heating of the body and the space/room, some special arrangements were used, called isgembi. One can observe a stone pedestal that was used either for ablutions or for cleansing/bathing. In addition, there were special solutions for built-in spaces and basins/washbasins/wells/drains. In addition, it was not until the Ottoman Empire that traditional building techniques surpassed those of antiquity. One factor of this progress was that the underground cities of the region, built mainly for protection and defence purposes, were gradually abandoned and, with the change in the understanding of comfort, were mixed over time with the stone masonry buildings built over these rock-cut units. Thanks to the ease of working the volcanic tufa rock in the region, they were used both as rooms dug underground and as masonry buildings. Food and shelter, as the two basic needs of life, shaped domestic technology, so various architectural construction details and spaces were considered for food storage, cooking, heating, cooling, and cleaning of the body and rooms. Cellars, special rooms or depots, bathing cabins, latrines, sinks, basins, ablution spaces, and heating systems such as fireplaces, braziers, tandoors, and ovens, are all evidence of these concerns. Even if these service systems are no longer used for their original purpose, most of them have been preserved to this day. The use of local materials and traditional construction techniques along with the system details enhance the harmony of the building with its surroundings and ensure its survival for many years. The case study building was restored in 2008. It serves as a museum commemorating the Architect Sinan, but it is not open all the time and can be visited only upon request and with the help of local people.

Therefore, for further studies, it is important to give the building a permanent function, with special attention to the original system details, and to visit it at certain times of the day with a responsible person and security. Only in this way will it be possible to show the traditional building systems and construction details to a larger number of visitors. Otherwise, there is a risk that some of these details will be lost due to insufficient use and lack of constant care and maintenance. In addition, old traditional building systems are to be discussed as formative factors in history, and their adaptability and potential for applicability to contemporary buildings should be studied in depth.

Location:	Service System Elements	Building Service Systems						
		Clean Water	Waste Water	Roof Drainage	Lighting	Ventilation	Heating	Cooling
SMS	Fireplaces/built-in furnaces					X	X ⌂	X
RCS	Casting furnaces						X	
RCS	Ovens						X	
SMS, RCS	Tandoors for cooking and heating						X ■ ⌂	
SMS	Braziers						⌂ √	
SMS	*Isgembi*						⌂ √	
RCS	Indirect heat gain from the animals						X ■	
SMS	Latrine		Δ					
SMS	Surface drain on the ground		X					
SMS	Waste water discharge channels		X					
SMS	Sunken ablution space		X					
SMS	Bathing cubicle		X					
SMS	Lavatories		X					
SMS	Pool	Δ						
SMS	Fountain	Δ						
SMS	Clean water distribution channels	Δ ⌂						
SMS	Windows				X	X		
SMS	Doors				X	X		
SMS, RCS	Ceiling hole/vent				X	X		
SMS	Small embrasure/ splayed openings				X	X		
SMS	Chimneys of the furnaces					X		X
SMS	Lighting shafts				X √	X √		
SMS	*Şerbetlik*				X			
SMS	*Tembel Delikleri*				X			
SMS	Cellar							X
RCS	*Çardak/* underground storage pits							X
SMS, RCS	Terracotta jars							X
RCS	Earthen roof			X				
RCS	Flat roof			X				
SMS	Waterspouts			X				
RSC	Parapet walls			X				
SMS, RCS	Roof slope			X				
Reliability Degree Assessment (from most reliable to the least)								
X	Data on location, form, dimension, material, and details of system elements are obtained from the building itself (system elements are already available and totally intact condition)							
Δ	Data on location, form, dimension, material, and details of system elements are obtained from the traces coming from the building (only the remains or traces of the system elements are available)							

Figure 19. Evaluation of service systems according to the degree of reliability of the obtained data (Rock Carved Section: RCS, Stone Masonry Section: SMS).

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Musicking and Identities In and From Religious Places of Thai Diasporas

in Chicagoland

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Abstract

Thai Americans are constantly imagining, sustaining, and performing their Thai identity to varying degrees, and this can be seen in the Chicagoland area. Regardless of the differences in musical genre or form, Thai diaspora communities perform and negotiate identity within sacred spaces through musicking. The act of musicking is important for Thai Americans to share their life with one another.

With the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic, Thai musicking communities of religious spaces in the Chicagoland area turned to virtual and outdoor mediums to perform and create. While changes were needed so that musicking opportunities could continue during the pandemic, the fluidity of space is not a new concept; the Thai musicking communities in Chicagoland were creating outside of their designated spaces, even prior to the pandemic. The identity of who they are and the religious spaces from which they come, remain a part of the performances, even as they create beyond those sacred spaces.

Keywords: *Place and Space, Musicking, Religion, Communities, Thai America*

Introduction

In fall of 2020, two Thai American communities in Metropolitan Chicago (Chicagoland) returned to in-person activities meeting at their respective religious places, St. Paul Thai Lutheran Church (St. Paul) and Thai Cultural Fine Arts Institute (TCFAI), situated at Wat Buddha Dhamma, a Thai Buddhist temple in the village of Willowbrook on the western part of Chicagoland. Through their meetings, musicking has stood out to be a part of what people are engaged in as they are in a process of imagining, sustaining, and negotiating their Thai identity (Thainess). It is from religious places that Thai Americans have been negotiating Thainess through musicking, enacting the totality of doing music, including listening, dancing, practicing, praying, and any preparations that are needed for the music activity to occur. At TCFAI, Thai classical music and traditional music from Northeast Thailand (Isan) can be heard. The music heard during the worship service at St. Paul is mostly influenced by western popular musical culture. However, the Thai classical music, Thai popular songs, and Isan traditional music heard during special events provides communities with opportunities of contemporary transnational Thainess.

On a Saturday evening in January 2021, after a Thai classical music rehearsal held at Wat Buddha Dhamma, I sat with the music director of TCFAI, *Ajaan* Chamni Sripraram,[1] who is also part of the long history of teaching world music in the cornfields of Illinois as the director of Northern Illinois University (NIU) Thai music ensemble (Wang 2014). Sitting on his couch, I brought up the unique position of TCFAI being situated at a temple in the Western suburbs of Chicago. He commented that Thai culture and music can be taught anywhere; it does not only have to be at a temple. *Ajaan* Chamni and affiliates of TCFAI are frequently invited to many performances, events, and workshops outside of the temple space. One place that *Ajaan* Chamni may be heard performing is at St. Paul Thai Lutheran Church (St. Paul) located in Forest Park, Illinois. The community at St. Paul also has their own aspects of disseminating Thai culture through musicking. For both of these communities, musicking is not only done in their respective religious places, but also in outreach taking their communities into public spaces.

In this paper, I focus on the musicking of Thai Americans that meet in two religious places in Chicagoland (figure 1). I agree with geographer Yi Fu Tuan's description of place as security and space as freedom (Tuan 1977:6). Within religious places there are sacred spaces that provide an extension of a home for Thai immigrants, which allows them the freedom to live out their Thai identity in a safe space (Bankston, Kim, Zhou 2002). Ethnomusicologist Bussakorn Binson and et.al observe the importance of communities living their culture in the diverse city of Bangkok (2014). For Thais in Chicagoland, religious places are spaces allowing both security and freedom. From these places, the communities participate in outreach events, in spaces that allow them the freedom to take their identities into the public. These communities are an example on how Thai diaspora communities live, sustain, and negotiate their culture in Chicagoland. I argue that musicking in and from religious place of Thai diaspora communities allows participants to enact and negotiate their Thainess. Thongchai Winichakul calls this a "widespread assumption of a common Thai identity" (Thongchai 1994:3). This assumption, for example, includes acquiring fluency of Thai language - one of the first known markers of Thainess by Siam monarch, King Vajiravudh (r 1910– 1925) (Renard 2000:63). Through musicking, transnational Thainess is being enacted through Thai communities in Chicagoland who are engaged in a process of diasporization and identity making. Musicking occurs with Thais and alongside non-Thais who are also part of the process.
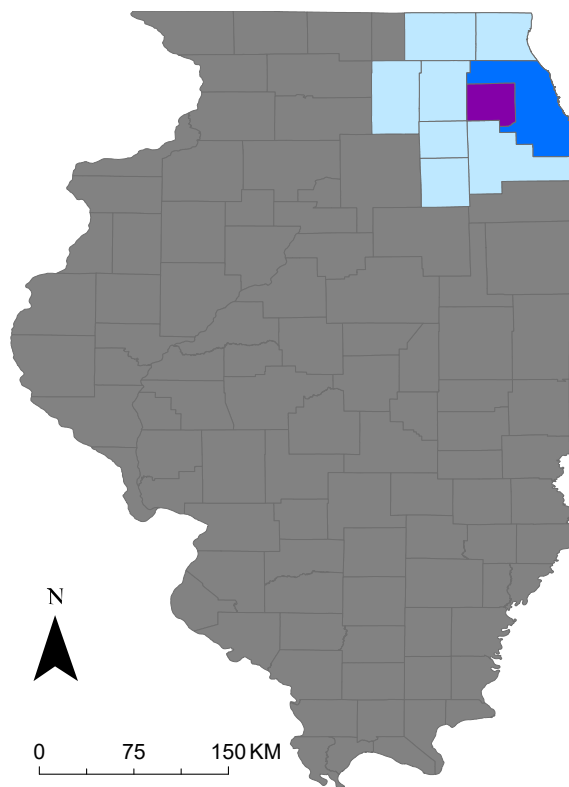
Figure 1. Map of Chicagoland in Illinois (light blue). St. Paul Lutheran Church is in Cook County (dark blue) and Wat Buddha Dhamma is in DuPage County (purple). Map created by the author.

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Thai musicking in religious places in Chicagoland turned to virtual and outdoor mediums to perform and create. Changes were needed in terms of space so that musicking opportunities could continue during the pandemic. The fluidity of space is not a new concept, since the Thai musicking communities in Chicagoland were seen creating outside of their religious places even prior to the pandemic. The identity of who they are and the religious places they come from still are a part of the performances when they appear beyond those spaces. Through musicking, Thai Americans in the two communities in Chicagoland create place and reflect Thai identities in Chicagoland (Figure 1: see map for Map of Chicagoland in Illinois).

At the onset of Covid-19 in the United States, communities found alternative ways to continue activities during nationwide stay-at-home mandates. Musicking throughout the pandemic changed, leading to an emphasis on singing from homes, outdoor, and virtual concerts. With a heightened experience of xenophobia, Asian Americans, have found safety and ability to find community within these religious places regardless of their faith traditions. TCFAI and St. Paul were such communities that persevered throughout the pandemic and provided communities of togetherness for Thais in Chicagoland (see figure 2 for locations).

Findings for this research comes from my personal experience and field research of the two communities, beginning in February 2019 to July 2021. During the Covid-19 pandemic my research required a hybrid ethnography, which included a digital ethnography of services and rehearsals on Facebook and YouTube (Przybylski 2021). Part of this research

includes formal and informal interviews with community members, and a survey that addresses Thai identity and musicking activities in religious communities of the Thai diaspora in Chicagoland at Christian and Theravada Buddhist Thai spaces. It is through the nuanced relationships that occur within Thai musicking communities that Thainess in Chicagoland can be further understood.

Soundscapes, Religious Places, and Thai American Experience
Thai communities in Chicagoland are part of a fluctuating soundscape. Ethnomusicologist Kay Shalamay illustrates soundscapes as a seascape to describe the ability that music has in moving throughout the world and absorbing changes in the music portrayed in locations where the music is place in (Shelemay 2015:9). Thais came to the United States in considerable numbers in the 1970s for various reasons, such as for work and education (Numrich 2005). Unlike many other Southeast Asians, in particular the Vietnamese, Lao, or Khmer, Thais did not come because they were fleeing as the result of the wars in Indochina (Padoongpatt 2017. As Thai American communities developed over time, they were also constructing new identities and issues regarding accessibility to Thai language resources as became an issues (Thepboriruk 2015a, Thepboriruk 2015b). Like many in diasporas, religious places serve as a safe space for migrants to pursue their cultural practices (Chow 2006:305).

Musicking in Thai America is part of preservation, as they are shaping "Thai identity" and reimagining Thainess in cities in the United States where Thai migrants have set up livelihoods in a new multicultural setting. Additionally, the complexities involved in the construction and functions of Thai music are multiple layers of the old, the new, the urban, and rural Thai musical elements that inform us of Thai America sonic living history. Adding to the complex layering is the realization that Thais are "imagined" to be present in the expansive Asian American community in United States, challenged to be culturally resilient and to sustain a sense of a central essence of Thainess—for the moment at least (Anderson 2016).

The Thai migrants in Chicagoland resemble other diaspora communities. A key aspect of diaspora communities is that people bring many of their homeland cultural practices with them when moving/migrating to a new place (Bankston, Kim, Zhou 2002). Given that the major religion of Thailand is Theravada Buddhism, Buddhist temples appeared with the expansion of Thai communities elsewhere in the United States. The emergence of Christian missions in Thailand, on the other hand, was followed by ancillary organizations focusing on Thais who had migrated to the United States. Religion may not be a necessary component to Thai and music communities, much like the ensemble Ethnomusicologist, Pornprapit Phosavadi observed. The Siam Sangkiit Ensemble in Seattle, Washington who was unaffiliated with any religious organization, used the musicians they had to establish their Thai identity in the metropolitan city (1998). Religion does provide a place of belonging, and certainly shows for the Thai diasporic community.

Theravada Buddhism has been in evidence in Thai American communities largely due to the widely understood three pillars of Thai identity (nation, religion, and monarch). Ethnomusicologist Priwan Nanongkham notes that the three pillars have been influential in Thai American communities, particularly Thai language and Buddhism in regard to cultural

performance and their Thai identity in America (2013). Thus, Theravada Buddhist temples would be the common place for many Thai Americans to gather in diaspora. For this obvious reason, researchers have mainly focused Thai related studies on Thai American musicking in Buddhist communities (Bao 2015; Moro 2012 and 2019, and Wisuttipat 2020).

Thai American Christian communities have been largely left out of the scholarly conversation regarding the Thai diaspora and their music. Musicking in the Thai church and Thai Buddhist temples are meeting places in Chicagoland where contemporary Thai music and Thai traditional music provided a role in sustaining Thai identity through musicking activities. Thai American communities like other diaspora groups are empowered through musicking and as ethnomusicologist Su Zheng notes, there may be stereotyping placed on diasporic communities (2010: 98). Music in its many forms encompasses ways in which Thais in Chicagoland are renegotiating identity and allowing their own communities to be part of the stories portrayed in the Thai community.

In the following section, I offer two vignettes of my experiences when having returned to the St. Paul and TCFAI communities while in-person during the pandemic. Through these, I expound on existing research on Asian American musicking, Thai American studies, religion, and negotiation of place and space.

Transcultural and Thainess at St. Paul Thai Church's "Music Day"

Figure 2. Thai Art portraying the Birth of Jesus hanging on the balcony in St. Paul Thai Lutheran Church.

On an early Sunday afternoon in September 2020, I returned to rehearse for a worship service at St. Paul Thai Lutheran Church (St. Paul) in Forest Park, Illinois for the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This service was also advertised as a "Music Day" in which they invite musicians in the community to play after the service, regardless of religious affiliation. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, St. Paul had to make changes in their gatherings, like many communities, such as moving worship services online and implementing hybrid services. With loosened public health guidelines in the fall, we were able to meet in small numbers following safety protocol. As I walked in the church, I heard the piano being played by a college-aged Thai student named Pun. He was playing classic English language hymns that I would sing as a child, such as "A Closer Walk with Jesus" but with a jazzy flare to it. Pun wore a mask while playing the piano, a mandate all attendees followed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I used the hand sanitizer that was at the entrance of the worship space and walked towards the front where the band was setting up. The band consisted of piano, drums, guitar, singers, and me on the viola. As I sit, I was reminded of the Thai artistic interpretation of the Gospel story that is displayed on the balcony area of the hall (see figure 3). I pulled out my viola and started to improvise along with Pun and the band, preparing for the service and "Music Day" that would be broadcasted on YouTube Live. The music selection for the service echoed a mix of familiar tunes from my Christian childhood and new songs that I have never heard before.

Starting an hour later, the few congregants sang along in Thai or English with the lyrics portrayed on the screen, which is a usual occurrence. However, due to pandemic guidelines the congregants in attendance were less than usual but others participated in the service via YouTube Live. The use of both English and Thai in the singing and liturgy were offered in both in-person offerings and virtual broadcasts, emphasizing an inclusive community for a growing transcultural congregation. YouTube Live became an avenue for congregants to still be connected, averaging 20-30 views weekly, along with the Line social media St. Paul Thai group chat, which has 87 members on it (accessed 29 August 2021). These virtual opportunities to connect became more crucial during a time of isolation and need for community.

Following the service, the transition to "Music Day" was made. Musicians that came to perform as part of "Music Day" were also people who I met the day before at the outdoor Thai Market, of which St. Paul would have a booth when the market was held on Saturdays. Songs that guests would sing were Thai popular songs such as, "ขอใจเธอแลกเบอร์โทร (Your Heart for My Number)" by Yinglee Srijumpol and "You Raise Me Up" an English song famously sung by Josh Groban. Another frequent musician and friend of St. Paul is *Ajaan* Chamni Srirapram, who was the director of the Thai Cultural Fine Arts Institute (TCFAI), an organization that I visited to find a place to practice Thai language and learn Thai culture but also an organization central to this research. For "Music Day" *Ajaan* Chamni played the pin an instrument from Northeast Thailand with music backtrack. A style of music that is usually accompanied by dance, often people would dance impromptu after hearing this music. However, at the church, no one joined in dance so he commented that he would not continue to play because there was not anyone dancing. This would either show the need of education regarding to this style of music or the hesitation in participating with Covid-19 protocol.

Practicing and Listening with Thai Cultural Fine Arts Institute Rehearsal at Wat Buddha Dhamma

On a normal Saturday TCFAI meets at Wat Buddha Dhamma, a Thai Temple in Willowbrook, Illinois that teaches Thai cultural classes, including language and music. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, however, TCFAI held Thai language classes on Zoom, and music classes directed by *Ajaan* Chamni were held virtually using social media such as Facebook and YouTube. As a multi-instrumentalist, *Ajaan* Chamni would share video tutorials for each respective instrument, such as the *khim, ranad*, and *khong wong yay* for students to practice with. Students were expected to share videos of their improvement which was posted on the virtual Facebook community. He even includes videos for less popular instruments, such as the saw-u, an instrument that he is teaching me. Like St. Paul, TCFAI began meeting in-person again in the fall of 2020, but the use of social media continued as a supplement to in-person learning.

I entered Wat Buddha Dhamma on a late morning of October 2020 for an in person TCFAI rehearsal that had a specific focus to prepare for the Asian American Coalition Chicago meeting set for November. I walked into the temple with my mask on and proceeded to the temperature check just inside the entrance of the temple. I was directed upstairs in the large hall where the rehearsals were held. I took my shoes off, a tradition often held in Asian culture, a tradition I also grew up learning to do inside of my home, and eventually heard the Thai hammer dulcimer *khim* being tuned as I progressed in the building.[2] Prior to the rehearsal I ate lunch with the musicians and parents, distanced of course. While *Ajaan* Chamni was finishing eating he asked one of the oldest *khim* players to lead the younger *khim* players to start off the rehearsal. The students proceeded to display a respect with a *wai* gesture to Chamni, reflecting what Wisuttipat acknowledges as a transnational Thainess, respect for elders (2020). *Ajaan* Chamni who credits his Buddhist background, invokes his teaching philosophies for TCFAI and NIU Thai Music Ensemble, encouraging his students as what music scholar Jui-Ching Wang notes as "losing self," which allows learners to have a deeper awareness of the music, environment, and each other (2019:46). As *Ajaan* Chamni entered into the rehearsal accompanying the *khim* players on hand drums. The musicians focus and ability to listen to each other reflects a pedagogical theme that *Ajaan* Chamni teaches his students, respect.

Thai Communities Musicking in Religious Places

Thai classical music has an association with expression of Thainess. Even though *Ajaan* Chamni is not from Isan (Northeast Thailand), he plays and often works with the Lao community in Chicagoland, playing Isan musical instruments, such as the khaen, a mouth organ made from bamboo, and the ponglang, a xylophone that features melody and harmony. According to *Ajaan* Chamni, he performs and teaches Thai classical music because he enjoys the music, and he believes the pleasure should be shared (*Ajaan* Chamni Sriprarm, Interview with Author, April 5, 2021). While Thai classical music is the core of the music curriculum at TCFAI, various genres of Thai music are taught as long as there are volunteers to teach it. The teaching of Thai traditional music, classical and regional, depends on available resources.

A Thai musician in Chicago recalled that during the 1980s, the beginning of Thai classical music in Chicago was started at the Consulate's home (Anonymous, Interview, May 5, 2021). The musician, a friend of *Ajaan* Chamni's, is an all-around percussionist, playing

different genres that echoed *Ajaan* Chamni's sentiment in establishing Thai classical music classes. He says that in the past, performances were not a pursuit of nationalistic attitudes and feelings, but simply because the musicians enjoyed the music.

Thai classical music and Thai nationalism do not go unnoticed (Wisuttipat 2020, Adler 2014, Wong 2006, Moro 1993). To this day, in Thai communities, Thai classical music has continuous support from the Royal Thai Consulate in Chicago. It was through their support and the community's coming together, that the teaching of Thai classical music grew and became a central part of teaching cultural productions, in addition to teaching the Thai language at Wat Dhammaram, the first Thai Temple in Chicagoland. This also led to the establishment of TCFAI and their classes at Wat Buddha Dhamma.

While TCFAI is not a religious institution, the Buddhist temple is open for TCFAI community needs. It is a convenient space for the Thai community to hold Thai cultural instruction at the temple. Through these cultural classes the Thai community benefits from having a space, and visitors like myself have the opportunity to learn more about the temple and Thai culture. TCFAI is thus an outlet for Thai Americans and non-Thais to participate in Thai cultural productions in a safe space where participants experience an environment filled with Thai language being spoken and classes being taught in Thai. The students that took part in my survey identify as Thai, and many attributes of their music and dance instruction at TCFAI complement their understanding of Thai identity. Many also learn western music at their public schools during the week but take part in Thai music instruction at TCFAI. As noted earlier, *Ajaan* Chamni emphasizes that Thai classical music and Isan music do not have to be taught only in the temple classes. He believes it can be taught anywhere, such as in public schools, much like the Thai and Lao music classes at Northern Illinois University that are being offered. Thai musicians who play different genres of Thai music do so because they enjoy the music varieties and appreciate taking advantage of the many opportunities to participate in these types of musicking in places where Thai communities exist, including but not restricted to religious spaces.

Churches in diaspora have a function similar to the Thai Buddhist temples in that diaspora cultural churches provide communities an opportunity for cultural refuge as Maria M. Chow analyzed the music of the Chinese Church in the United States (2006). She says that Chinese churches are venues for migrants to have "a place to pursue the community life they may otherwise lose" (Chow 2006:305). The Thai religious centers, both the Church and Buddhist Temples in Chicago function as a place of refuge where Thais and non-Thais may freely participate in cultural productions. These religious places, much like the Chinese Churches of which Chow speaks of, allow Thais and non-Thais to pursue a community life where cultural productions, such as musicking, is a central component of expressing the community.

During the worship service at St. Paul, the music is largely western hymns translated into Thai and includes three editions of hymnals. These hymnals were designed for the St. Paul community, including lyrics in English and Thai. The later hymnal only has songs with a chord chart, not with staff notation. Also sung in the church are new Thai Christian songs composed by Thai Christian song writers. Worship scholar Sooi Ling Tan argues that Thai songwriters present Thainess in the music, even with western influence. These elements appear in the songs that are chosen and the musical styles themselves.

The first aspect of Thainess is argued by Tan that "the themes in the songs encapsulate the Christian experience of struggle" (Tan 2019:100). The struggle that Tan speaks of is the Thai Christians struggle in the expectation of Thais to be Buddhist. Senior Pastor of the church for over 20 years, *Ajaan* Pongsak experienced this struggle as a young student in Bangkok, who hesitated in joining the Buddhist rituals that were conducted in school (Holmes 2015:19). This does not reflect as a problem in the Thai Chicagoland community. The Thai Chicagoland community often find ways to connect, such as playing badminton together and plays music together. Theologian Mary Codman-Wilson recalls that *Ajaan* Pongsak would encourage members to take part in Buddhist temple activities, since that is where the Thai cultural festivities were separated (Codman-Wilson 1992:53). Even though the struggles are not the same in each community, the songs that St. Paul sings do articulate the shared struggle of the Thai community, as the songs and prayers are often uplifting for the Thai community in the United States and in Thailand. These struggles also include the ongoing pandemic, issues regarding human rights, and the struggles of the greater Asian community with the ongoing trauma experienced by xenophobia and Asian Hate.

The second aspect of Thainess is presented in the newly composed songs, which have elements of a Thai popular genre known as lukthung (Thai country music) or Isan music in them. That could be the reason why the pastor told me he thought I should learn to play the khaen. While these newer songs are used in the services, they are not all in the hymnals, as the hymns have mostly older hymns or popular Christian songs translated into Thai. When I asked *Ajaan* Pongsak if a new hymnal would be published, he replied that there is no need for a new hymnal, as all the songs are now projected on the chapel wall. Moreover, many new Thai Christian songs are available free online on the Project W501 website, a Christian project dedicated to the production and dissemination of Thai Christian music written by Thai songwriters.[3]

St. Paul has weekly Sunday services, which usually include rehearsals at 2:00 p.m.; services at 3pm; dinner at 5pm; and badminton matches or music nights after dinner. Services usually have drum set, piano, guitar, bass guitar, viola, and voices as part of the music worship (singspiration). The Sunday service follows a strict liturgy with the following structure: singspiration, prayer, sermon, special music, offering, and benediction. The songs are mostly western hymns translated into Thai, and musicians in the band utilize the hymnals for these songs. However, most congregants use the text projected on the wall screen, which displays lyrics in Thai and English.

The congregation can participate in singing following the guidance of the lead singer and lyrics. With the advancement in technology, congregants can participate in singing even without the hymnal (See Figure 7). The projected languages are Thai and English, and the singing follows accordingly. This gives the community the opportunity to join into the degree that they wish. The musicking on a Sunday afternoon is part of the greater liturgy, but the music that begins the service is called "singspiration" following the section of the bulletin called "the Gathering."

Along with the music, the entire period is filled with prayers, scripture reading, and a sermon. While the Thai membership is clearly living their Thainess within Christianity, their identity as Christians amongst other members of different cultural identities, embracing the element of a multicultural Thai church, are joined together through the musicking experience.

Special events such as "Music Day," Thanksgiving service, and Christmas service are events when additional community non-Christian musicians also perform. Members of the Royal Thai Consulate-General of Chicago are also usually invited. For example, in 2019, for the Thanksgiving service, the Deputy Consulate General Siriporn Tantipanyathep was in attendance and supported the Thai Christian community with her attendance. These special events are also times when Thai classical music or Thai folk music is performed by congregants or musicians in the community, such as one of my primary informants, *Ajaan* Chamni, from TCFAI.

The day I performed during the pandemic, Chamni also played the khaen during the Music Day. It was reminiscent of the pre-COVID 19 productions that musicians of the Thai community would have performed that Codman-Wilson experienced at the Christmas performance, where there was a group of students showcasing Thai dance (Codman-Wilson, Mary. 1992). Chamni played the khaen on his own and with a music back track, the special events often provide space for community members to perform regardless of their religious background. These are moments where non-Christian themed songs are more likely to be performed. While music like Thai classical music and Isan music can be heard at TCFAI, it is not part of the everyday soundscape of St. Paul. Still, there is a place for such music in the Church space. In a conversation with a member of the church about playing Thai instruments like, ranad, *Ajaan* Pongsak realized that several members studied Thai instruments when they were in Thailand but they could not play them anymore because they did not have access to them. So, he said that St. Paul should have their own Thai instruments to fulfill the need.

Time permitting, both TCFAI and St. Paul members take the opportunity to engage in activities outside the sacred spaces. Opportunities to be out in public, like the outdoor Thai Market, Columbus Day parade, and at universities, allow Thai communities to create artistry in the freedom of that public space provides.

Outreach Events: From Religious Places to Creating in Spaces

Outreach events are events that allow members of TCFAI and St. Paul to legitimize their communities in public spaces, that is, outside of the places where they usually meet. Musicking is part of their process of legitimizing their respective communities. The process has many facets. Because Asian America musicking is often missing in public spaces, Thai musicians from St. Paul and TCFAI strived to provide opportunities to share their music publicly so that their cultural lives can be seen through their performances (Shimakawa 2000: 288), and the audience can participate in celebrating Thai musicking (Wong 2004 and Bryant 2009). This can be seen similarly as Larasati et al. identifies the interconnectivity of making culture to establishing space in Indonesia (2022). Essentially, St. Paul and TCFAI both have unique functions in creating their particular musicking in space.

A central function of St. Paul's outreach is to legitimize their Christian identity outside the worship space. One example is its participation in the Thai Market, where through music and their presence at the market, they legitimize their Thai Christian identity. Various outreach events occur, such as various volunteering opportunities in the Chicagoland community, and feeding the homeless. St. Paul's participation at the Thai Market was one type of outreach event in which I was able to participate. The presence at Thai Market demonstrates St. Paul's accessibility to the community.

For TCFAI their presence in public provides opportunities for musicians to play in students' schools and in public displays, even alongside university musicians who are novice learners, giving enjoyment to both students and teachers. These public displays allow for the Thais to engage in an outward process of becoming (Braggs 2016 and Wisuttipat 2020). The other layer attached to these performances are non-Thais musicking with them, which allows for an extended element of the diasporization process where non-Thais are learning alongside the Thai community.

While I did not attend as many TCFAI events, I was able to be part of several TCFAI outreach events through my own participation prior to the start of the study, either as a presenter, volunteer, or performer. I observed three examples of their outreach performances: a large group performance at Indiana University, a small group library performance, and performing virtually with the Northern Illinois University Thai Music Ensemble. Below is the description of several such outreach events; I begin with St. Paul at the Thai market, followed by the TCFAI related events.

Creating in Spaces - Christian Identity and Being Thai: St. Paul Lutheran Church at Thai Outdoor Market

Figure 3. St. Paul Booth at the Thai Market in Chicago.

St. Paul participates in outreach activities so as to be more involved with the community. One event is the Thai Market, held in an open space behind the Thai Twin restaurant in Bridgeview, IL. Weather permitting, the Thai community has Thai Market on the weekends. Every month, they alternate between Saturday and Sunday, and St. Paul participates in the market on months when it is held on Saturday. Many Thai community organizations participate and sell Thai items and food. St. Paul prepares food to sell and plays music. The music performed includes popular songs sung both in English, such as: "You Raise Me Up"

by Rolf Løvland and Brendan Graham, "The Joke is on Me" by Bee Gees and Thai popular songs such as, "ขอใจเธอแลกเบอร์โทร (Your Heart for My Number)" by Yinglee Srijumpol เพียงแค่ใจเรารักกัน (Pieng Kae Jai Rao Ruk Kun) by Viyada Komarakul Na Nakorn (Figure 7: Photo of St. Paul at Thai Market).

On a Saturday afternoon during the COVID-19 Pandemic, I joined the musicians on my viola at the St. Paul booth. We all wore our masks and distanced ourselves from each other around the booth. In the booth people from the church were selling food for the church as a fundraiser. Surrounding us were other venders selling Thai food and souvenirs, representing the interweaving of food in Thai America (Padoongpatt, 2017:17) and music's active role in uniting people in the process. Also present was a booth representing Wat Dhammaram, the largest Thai temple in the area, just two blocks away. The people visiting the market were Thai and non-Thai customers. The music performed by St. Paul participants was like a Sunday worship, sung in Thai and English, demonstrating the various singer's comfort in singing in the two languages, accompanied by a keyboard, guitar, and viola. Both Christian and non-Christian songs were performed. Joining in the outdoor jam session were members from other booths and visitors to the Thai Market. These musicking moments outdoors at the Thai market provided the longing of in person creative collaboration that was lacking due to the uncertainty. Ever since March 2020, communities were not able to meet each other in person. This outdoor Thai Market provided members a free atmosphere outside of the Church space for musicking and sharing their Christian identity in a public space, resembling a freeing connotation which Tuan concludes that space provides (1977).

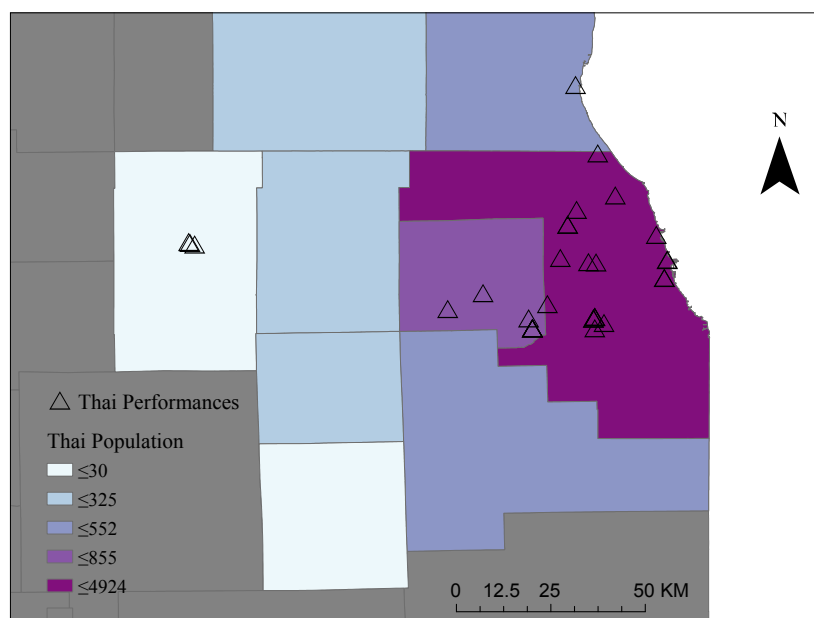## Creating in Spaces – Mobility as Living Culture and Pedagogy

Figure 4. Map showing locations of Thai performances related to Thai population.

TCFAI's versatility in providing a wide range of styles of Thai music for different occasions offers ample opportunities to perform for the community, even extending their performance outside the Chicagoland area to cross the borders to Indiana and Wisconsin.

The map provided illustrates places where TCFAI and *Ajaan* Chamni participated in 2018-2020 (See figure 5 for TCFAI performance sites). These events show the geographical presence of TCFAI on the greater Chicagoland community. While the performance sites correlate with higher density of Thai population, the performances were not all for Thai audiences. The performances like NIU are representations of the outward showing of Thai culture, giving non-Thais an opportunity to participate through listening, at provided locations in Chicagoland, for a Thai American musicking presence (Bryant 2009). Through the versatility of TCFAI, the events in which I was able to participate, provides a glimpse of the other events where TCFAI performed.

On Friday, April 19, 2019, Indiana University Center for ASEAN Studies hosted "Passages: Locating Global Traditions in Southeast Asian Music and Performance, an Interdisciplinary Symposium," which included lectures and performances by Kent State University Thai music ensemble and Sin-Isan Ensemble from Mahasarakham University, Thailand. For this all-Friday symposium, TCFAI had a large group performing Thai dance and playing *khim*.

The symposium focused on Southeast Asian Music—particularly Tai/Thai music— because the featured Sin-Isan Ensemble was performing that evening. In addition to participating in this one-day symposium as a presenter in the morning, I stayed as an attendee all day for the event. Driving in from Chicago, the TCFAI musicians arrived in the afternoon and performed in the evening before the performance of Sin-Isan Ensemble. The multi-function university classroom had a stage, where ensembles performed, and a podium, where speakers stood and talked. The music the TCFAI musicians played featured their *khim* players and their dancers (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. TCFAI performance at Indiana University. Photo by author.

On Saturday, September 4, 2019, Dekalb Library hosted a multicultural event "8 Countries 1 Day." This event featured different countries and included cultural activities, food, and drinks. I volunteered for the event by assisting the NIU Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) booth in passing out samples of a Thai fruit drink Mogu Mogu, as well as interacting with visitors in talking about Thailand and giving stamps on participants' passports. To

enhance the experience for the multicultural event, TCFAI was invited to perform a short Thai dance. Because the event took place at the same time as the regular rehearsals at TCFAI, instead of showcasing a larger group, they could only feature two of their dancers at this event. The versatility of TCFAI performances allows for different degrees of size and types of performances based on the context of the events and when the event would take place. Many of the dancers are also *khim* players and can play other instruments as well, like their teacher, *Ajaan* Chamni. The ability of the performers to be available for different types of performance situations showed viability during the pandemic, when they were required to adapt to a different performing situation.

The first two events were public performances by invitation, an example of many of their public performances. These invites demonstrate the versatility of the type of events that TCFAI participates in as a large ensemble at a university or a smaller group of dancers at a library. The third event demonstrates the musicians' and dancers' persistence in sharing their culture during Covid-19. Rather than performing for a live audience, the performances was pre-recorded prior to the air date.

Creating in Spaces - Virtual Resiliency

St. Paul and TCFAI share a commonality of being Thai while in America, simultaneously sharing their distinguished identities. St. Paul members establish their presence as being both Thai and Christian in a multicultural Church. TCFAI meets mainly at a Theravada Buddhist temple for cultural classes in Thai classical music and Thai language but presents to the wider Chicagoland community their Thainess through their musicking. It is through the freedom of space that Thai musicking can be heard beyond religious places, and in a wider public (Tuan 1977). These opportunities of musicking outside of the comfortability of the religious place into spaces around the Chicagoland provide the much-needed Asian American representation, even more the Thai American representation that lacks in the mainstream arts (Wong 2004, Bryant 2009, Zheng 2010).

Virtual Resiliency and Covid-19

Like many communities, St. Paul and TCFAI demonstrated "virtual" resiliency as its own space during Covid-19 pandemic. St. Paul broadcast their worship through social media. When possible, they took advantage of opportunities. Though the numbers in attendance had to be restricted, the communities met and used outreach events to continue their mission throughout the pandemic. Musical expression of faith by St. Paul church continued, and those who were not able to attend in person were still connected virtually and thus were given the opportunity to participate while they followed the PowerPoint presentation on the broadcast (figure 11). As previously noted, St. Paul's participation in the Thai Market provided a creative outlet beyond the virtual activities during Covid-19.

TCFAI used their public space to stay connected and to prepare for their AACC performance through virtual lessons. The recordings of their individual practices were sent to *Ajaan* Chamni. The use of Facebook encouraged participants to continue practicing and to follow their progression, even during the pandemic. They collaborated fully with the newly formed NIU Thai ensemble, with only two in-person rehearsals. These virtual spaces further expand Yi Fu Tuans notion of space as freedom, providing Thai American communities to further expand their audience through virtual mediums.

Figure 6. St. Paul YouTube Live set up with PowerPoint.

Conclusion

With multiple means available for the transmission of Thai traditional musical, differences between the musicking spaces and practices of Buddhist temples, compared to selection of musical expression in the Thai Christian community, informs the complex musicking and imagining of Thai identity in Thai America in Chicagoland. Musicking expresses the complexities of transnational Thainess in Chicagoland. As musical agendas and various means of transmitting and continuing Thai performing arts, these communities provide contrasts in the role of music as an identity marker.

Even throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, many communities continued to find ways to get together. This is also true for the Thai American musicking communities I examined in my study, as in-person meetings were more difficult to arrange. Thai Americans are, in their religious practices, imagining, sustaining, and creating their "Thai" identity to varying degrees, which was already seen in the Chicagoland area prior to the outbreak of the pandemic. Through varied musicking experiences, Thai diaspora communities discovered opportunities to perform and negotiated their Thainess in religious places and secular spaces that transcend their proscribed practices. As shown in my study, Thai musicking provides Thai Americans representation in Chicagoland, but also allows for non-Thais to participate and learn, encompassing a more thorough form of diasporization, in which Thai American communities continue to live.

In the past couple years, our understanding of place and space has been challenged through finding alternative means of community-making in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Virtual space has given communities the freedom that people continue to long for and allows us to connect. Through virtual spaces, musicking occurs in communities as they continue to long for spaces to create, whether it happens in homes, backyards, temples, churches, or over Zoom.

Musical communities are involved in sustaining Thai classical music in the temple setting. However, sustaining Thai identity goes beyond just Thai classical music. The religious places that provide community also contribute ways for their Thainess to be maintained. In the different Thai American communities that I have identified in Chicagoland, I am provided with a window to investigate how musicking is part of the imagining Thai America. A study of sacred and secular communities in Chicagoland allows me to more fully appreciate and understand the role of musicking in Thai American identity formation. The significance of this study shows the nuances of musicking, identity, religious place, and public spaces for Thai Americans in 21st century American society. With the onset of Covid-19, the histories of xenophobia and Asian discrimination were further realized. To address the need for deeper understanding of Asian American history and addressing false Asian stereotypes, the state of Illinois required Asian American history in K-12 curriculum. These musicking opportunities in religious places and public spaces also addresses these needs for the greater American society to be more inclusive.

Endnotes

1   *Ajaan* is a respectful title given to professors/teachers. The titled would be followed by their first name. In the community *Ajaan* Chamni is also called *Khruu*, which is a title commonly used for artists. In this case, *Ajaan* Chamni is also my music professor at Northern Illinois University, so throughout the paper I will use "*Ajaan* Chamni."
    * The Thai Romanization system in this article follows the Royal Thai Institute system with a few modifications. I utilize the j for จ and double letters to represent long vowels and single letter for a short vowel.

2   Here the connotation of taking off one's shoes in Thai culture is a matter of cleanliness and respect.

3   W501. Accessed December 5, 2020. https://w501.org.

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The Impact of War-Induced Trauma on Young Israelis: *A QualitativeExamination of the David's Circle Project at Koh Phangan*

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the psychological impact of war-induced trauma on young Israelis who sought refuge and healing in Koh Phangan, Thailand, through participation in the David's Circle Project. The project provides a supportive, non-clinical space for the October 7th trauma Nova survivors and young reserve soldiers. In-depth, semi-structured interviews and group storytelling revealed common themes of emotional dislocation, mistrust, and existential uncertainty. The findings underscore the importance of alternative, culturally sensitive healing environments for trauma recovery and point to the therapeutic value of grouping in a safe physical and emotional space. Implications for trauma-informed care and post-conflict rehabilitation for young adults are discussed.

Keywords: *War-induced Trauma, David's Circle Project, October 7th Hamas Massacre, Israeli Survivors of the Nova Music Festival, Reservists*

Introduction

The October 7, 2023, Hamas-led massacre and the ensuing war left deep psychological scars on survivors of the Nova Festival and Israeli reserve soldiers who served in combat (Schechtman et al., 2025). Beyond the immediate trauma of witnessing death and destruction, many survivors have experienced post-traumatic stress symptoms, emotional distress, and a profound loss of trust in Israel's military and governmental institutions (Weltman, 2020). This erosion of trust, combined with the absence of adequate therapeutic support, has led to an increasing number of young Israelis relocating abroad, either as an intentional decision to leave the country or as part of a temporary search for relief (Israel population growth 2025). However, without proper coping mechanisms, many are likely to engage in substance use, ranging from recreational to severe drug consumption, which further exacerbates their emotional turmoil (Volkow & Blanco, 2023).

In response to the growing distress among young Israeli war survivors who arrived in Koh Phangan, Thailand, the LDS Foundation, established in memory of David Ne'eman, a Nova Festival victim, created David's Circle in Koh Phangan. Koh Phangan, a tropical island of approximately 125 square kilometers with a population of around 14,000 residents, is located in the Gulf of Thailand, southeast of Bangkok. Known for its natural beauty and spiritual culture, the island hosts over 20 mental health and well-being centers, including trauma rehabilitation, somatic therapy, mindfulness-based recovery, and psychedelic-assisted integration programs. This ecosystem makes Koh Phangan a distinctive refuge for trauma survivors seeking culturally diverse, non-clinical forms of healing (Wonderland Healing Center 2023; Holina Center 2024; Thailand Wellbeing Report 2024).

This initiative offers an open, non-clinical space, bi-weekly group meetings, creative arts workshops, and a judgment-free environment where Nova survivors and veterans can process their trauma, share stories, and find communal support. The project aims to provide a non-judgmental environment where individuals can share their experiences at their own pace, without external pressure or commitment as expected in a therapeutic relationship. Preliminary observations suggest that David's Circle has become a vital anchor for young Israelis, offering them emotional expression and social support. The Circle's team is comprised primarily of Israeli volunteers who are not professionals but undergo training and guidance. This creates a therapeutic environment that is highly egalitarian, non-hierarchical, and rooted in a sense of shared destiny. Since its launch (May 2024), The Circle has recorded over 1000 visits (June 2024), many of whom became frequent and active Open Space members. The extent to which such initiatives contribute to long-term psychological resilience and reintegration remains unclear. This study seeks to fill this gap by investigating how war survivors perceive and experience David's Circle and its role in shaping their future outlook.

Background

On October 7, 2023, Hamas-led militants executed a brutal attack on Israeli communities near the Gaza border, including the Nova music festival, where over 360 young people were murdered, and many others were abducted or severely injured (Israel Ministry of Health 2023). Survivors of the Nova massacre endured prolonged exposure to life-threatening conditions, hiding for hours in fields and shelters, witnessing deaths of friends, and in many cases, narrowly escaping captivity or death. Initial findings from clinicians and trauma centers report high incidences of acute stress disorder, complex PTSD, dissociative symptoms, and grief reactions among this population (Halperin et al., 2025). Many survivors also

display symptoms of survivors' guilt, hypervigilance, and mistrust toward previously relied-upon social and governmental institutions, particularly after a perceived failure of protection and rescue operations (Nacasch et al., 2024).

Research on trauma from mass violence consistently shows that young adults exposed to massacres or terror attacks are particularly vulnerable to long-term psychological harm due to developmental factors, identity formation, and often-limited coping strategies (Gil-Rivas et al., 2004). The combination of direct physical danger, loss of peers, and national trauma has led to what some Israeli clinicians describe as "collective post-traumatic rupture" (Friedman-Peleg & Bilu, 2011; Vitman Schorr et al., 2025).

At the same time, Israel initiated a large-scale military campaign that has required unprecedented mobilization of reserve forces. More than 300,000 reservists were called up, many of whom have remained on duty for extended periods, up to 300 consecutive days, under intense operational stress. Research on the psychological toll of prolonged combat deployment indicates significant mental health challenges among reserve soldiers, especially when deployments are sudden, extended, and emotionally charged (Kibris et al., 2024). Israeli studies following the Second Lebanon War and Operation Protective Edge found PTSD prevalence among reserve combatants ranging from 13% to 20% several months post-deployment (Levi & Lubin, 2018). Contributing factors include exposure to violence, ambiguous combat goals, lack of decompression time, and re-entry into civilian life without sufficient support (Markowitz et al., 2023).

In the current war, qualitative reports and preliminary mental health surveys indicate elevated levels of emotional exhaustion, anxiety, moral injury, and detachment from both military and civil institutions among many reservists (Levy & Gross, 2024). Feelings of abandonment by the state and loss of trust in leadership have become prominent themes in post-service narratives (Popescou-Sarry, 2023). Together, these events, the Nova massacre and the prolonged deployment of Israeli reservists, have resulted in an unprecedented mental health crisis among young Israelis. Both groups face not only clinical symptoms of trauma but also existential disruptions in identity, belonging, and trust in core societal structures. Amidst this psychological rupture, informal, non-clinical spaces such as David's Circle in Koh Phangan have emerged as potential alternatives to conventional therapy, offering culturally and emotionally attuned support. However, the long-term psychological efficacy and social impact of such spaces remain empirically unexamined. The present study seeks to explore how participants who experienced the Nova massacre and/or prolonged military service perceive and engage with David's Circle. Specifically, it aims to understand: (1) how they experience this communal healing space; (2) what meanings they attribute to it in the context of their trauma and recovery; and (3) how their participation shapes their sense of future, belonging, and psychological integration.

Methodology

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the experiences and perceptions of the participants in David's Circle. The methodology includes:

1. Semi-structured interviews – Conducted with ten Nova Festival survivors and former soldiers who regularly attend David's Circle activities in Koh-Pangan.
2. Free storytelling in the circle with participants, using the Group Stories Fabric Technique (GSFT) described by Lev-Wiesel (2015).
3. Thematic analysis – Identifying common themes of trauma, sense of place, and community support that emerged within the stories and the semi-structured interviews.

Participants and Procedure

The sample consisted of 32 young Israeli adults between the ages of 21 and 26, all of whom were either survivors of the Nova Music Festival massacre or Israel Defense Forces reservists who participated in the ensuing "Iron Swords" war. Participants who frequently attended David's Circle and expressed interest in being interviewed, either individually (n = 10) or as part of a group session held within the David Circle framework (n = 22) during February 2025. The mean age was 24 (range: 21-26). Most participants had completed high school education and were single.

Following approval from both the David Circle program director and ethical clearance from the Tel Hai Academic College Ethics Committee, participants were recruited and informed about the purpose and nature of the study. Informed consent was obtained before data collection.

Two qualitative data collection methods were employed. First, ten individual in-depth interviews were conducted by trained researchers using a semi-structured interview guide. These interviews, which lasted approximately one hour each, focused on participants' personal experiences during and after the traumatic events of October 7th, their coping strategies, and the significance they attributed to participating in the David Circle. The following questions were asked: Can you describe your experience on October 7th and during the subsequent war? What happened to you, and how did you come to join the David Circle? What does the David Circle mean to you personally?

The second method involved a storytelling-based group session with 22 participants. To foster an open and communal atmosphere, each participant was invited to share a personal story of their choice, such as an event, experience, or situation, without any imposed thematic direction. Group members were instructed not to interrupt or comment during others' storytelling. Participants chose freely when and in what order to share. All narratives were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by a research assistant. The storytelling was analyzed according to the following principles: Holistic Reading: Each member group's narrative was first read in its entirety to grasp the overall tone, structure, and emotional trajectory. The second stage was Thematic Structuring: Stories were then segmented into meaning units based on content, emotion, and narrative shifts. The third stage was Recurrent themes (e.g., trauma, belonging, disillusionment, healing) that were identified across groups. The fourth stage was the Dialogical Interpretation: Emphasis was placed on how meaning was shaped collectively – how one participant's account was echoed, expanded, or reframed by others. Patterns of resonance, silencing, or tension were noted. The final stage was the Narrative Form and Function: In addition to content, the structure and purpose of stories were examined (e.g., testimony, justification, metaphor, resistance). The social function of storytelling within the group, such as fostering solidarity or re-authoring traumatic experience, was central to interpretation. Combining individual interviews and collective storytelling enabled a rich, multidimensional understanding of the participants' psychological responses, sense-making processes, and recovery trajectories within the Open Space communal context.

Key Principles and Operation of David's Circle

The social and communal dimension of *The Circle* is expressed through twice-weekly gatherings around a bonfire, accompanied by spontaneous live music jam sessions initiated by the participants and supported by volunteers. At the end of each day, a closing circle is held around the fire, during which participants are invited to share personal reflections guided by rotating thematic prompts selected by the staff (e.g., "What gives me inner

peace?," "What have I recently discovered about myself?," "What do I bring to the world?," "What does music mean to me?" "What have I learned from my difficult experiences?"). Individual therapeutic support is also available. Participants requiring additional care are referred by the social worker managing the space to professional mental health services in Israel. These referrals are arranged during the participants' stay abroad and include access to online therapy. Another key element of *The Circle's* approach is the mentorship model. Mentors are themselves survivors of the October 7th events (primarily from the Nova music festival) and have undergone professional training. They serve as peer guides within space, offering a unique therapeutic contribution rooted in shared experience and mutual identification. Participation in maintaining the space is intentionally collaborative. When interested, participants are encouraged to participate in various aspects of day-to-day operations, including tasks such as organizing refreshments, lighting the fire, maintaining order, and even leading peer-led workshops (e.g., clay sculpting, sports as a lifestyle, candle-making, or charcoal painting). In acute psychological situations, The Circle has taken on a crisis intervention role. A dedicated emergency team was established in partnership with Chabad House, the Wonderland Healing Center, and the Holina Treatment Center to manage urgent mental health situations among Israeli youth on the island. Access to The Circle is gained through several informal channels: word of mouth from past participants, outreach by trained mentors engaging with other young Israelis on the island, social media platforms (notably The Circle's Instagram account), a dedicated WhatsApp group that currently includes over 350 rotating members and referrals from therapists and treatment centers in Israel.

Data Analysis

The semi-structured interviews enabled participants to articulate their emotions and experiences freely. At the same time, the storytelling component offered valuable access to the deeper, often unconscious layers of their experiences within the group context. This study employed a phenomenological approach, which posits that individuals interpret and narrate their experiences through the lens of their social environments and subjective realities. Phenomenology centers on how individuals make meaning from their "lived experience," both personally and within broader socio-political and cultural frameworks. This form of analysis attends to the implicit, taken-for-granted structures that guide interaction, such as unspoken norms, shared common sense, and the perception of time and space in a specific context (Giorgi, 2012; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Through the process of phenomenological reduction, core experiential themes were identified and interpreted in relation to one another using a "hermeneutic circle" approach (Smith, 2004). In this framework, each theme highlights a specific element of the experience (the part), while simultaneously deriving meaning from its connection to the broader narrative (the whole).

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structure and purpose of stories were examined (e.g., testimony, justification, metaphor, resistance). The social function of storytelling within the group, such as fostering solidarity or re-authoring traumatic experience, was central to interpretation.

Findings

The themes emerged from both research tools: the semi-structured interviews and the storytelling method were combined. The qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interviews and the storytelling revealed five themes that characterize the participants' psychological and emotional experiences following the traumatic events of October 7 and the subsequent war.

Loss of Faith and Trust in the State of Israel

A prominent theme expressed by participants was a profound erosion of trust in the State of Israel and its institutions. Many conveyed a deep sense of betrayal, rooted in the perceived failure of the state to protect its citizens during the Nova Festival massacre and to support them adequately in the aftermath. Survivors described feelings of abandonment, disillusionment with the military and government, and a re-evaluation of their national identity. This loss of trust not only affected their relationship with the state but also destabilized their foundational beliefs about safety, belonging, and civic duty. A, age 28, said, "I lost trust in the world, in reality… what's good, what's bad? Where am I even?" G said, "The state? I had an intense complex about it – like, how? How is it even possible to do something like that? How can they allow a gate to be opened and not deploy forces, not protect our citizens?"

Psychological Consequences of Trauma

The second theme involved the enduring psychological and emotional consequences of the trauma. Participants frequently reported symptoms aligned with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including recurring nightmares, hypervigilance, emotional numbness, and intrusive memories. In addition to classic trauma-related symptoms, many expressed overwhelming feelings of loneliness, isolation, and emotional disconnection from their environment. For example, A 24-year-old described "I could not sleep, have nightmares… jump whenever I hear a siren…" B said, "A month after Nova, I had a breakdown…" Some reported difficulties engaging in daily routines or forming close interpersonal relationships, for example, C said, "I felt no one could understand what I experienced, the horror, the body freeze…not even my closest friends and family… ." The absence of structured mental health support exacerbated their distress, pushing some toward maladaptive coping mechanisms such as substance use or emotional withdrawal.

Blurred Future and Uncertainty About Life Direction

The third theme revolved around a disrupted sense of the future. Some participants described confusion regarding their life goals, ambitions, and plans. The trauma had shaken their worldview so profoundly that previously held dreams or career paths no longer seemed relevant or attainable. For some, the uncertainty was existential: a questioning of purpose, place, and identity. This sense of "suspended life" left many in a liminal space – no longer connected to their pre-trauma lives, yet unable to envision a clear path forward. For example, A 25-year-old described, "before the war I had plans and knew what I wanted to do…I am not sure anymore…should I graduate or quit?"

In addition to the individual interviews, analysis of the storytelling group session conducted in David's Circle yielded two additional themes that reflected the communal and symbolic dimensions of the participants' experience:

Loss of Belonging and Rootedness

Across many of the personal stories shared in the group, a recurring motif of alienation from Israel, not just from the state but from the broader sense of "home." The participants' narratives conveyed a disconnection from the physical and emotional landscape of Israel (several included their family as well), with many articulating that they no longer felt a sense of rootedness or cultural belonging. This estrangement was described not only as a reaction to the events themselves but also as a reflection of how they perceived societal and institutional responses, or lack thereof, after the trauma. The following story was told by a 22-year-old female, is an example: "I felt a calling before it all began – on Rosh Hashanah – to move to Kiryat Shmona. I'm from Be'er Sheva – what's the connection? But I listened to it. I chose an apartment, signed a lease. It was September. I was waiting to move. Then the chaos began, and they told me to wait. A week later, Kiryat Shmona was evacuated. I didn't know where I belonged anymore. I moved back in with my mom. We fought. I stayed with friends. I couldn't find a place to live. I tried helping another girl, and somehow, I ended up with housing thanks to that lease. But I felt like the energy in Israel was closing in on me – suffocating. And then I touched a feeling I was most afraid of: darkness. Suddenly, I allowed myself to feel it. I was at the sea and I dove into the pain. I discovered that every part is just a part – and that there's this one deep part. As I moved through the darkness, I returned to something else: the beach, the sun, life. But then the tension increased, this clenching feeling... I saw someone wearing something that triggered me – I posted it on Instagram, even though it was unrelated. I kept moving forward, but everyone around me had stiff faces, and yet I felt like I could breathe. with time, I started feeling it again... that the energy in the air was choking. Something inside me said: Start moving. I wanted to go to the U.S., but I didn't get a visa. Then I started getting signs, crystal clear, that I should fly to London. I booked a ticket, flew there, and stayed for nine months. I was living my dream, but still, part of me was in Israel, and part of me was there. I felt selfish, but kept going on the path that felt right. I realized I'm both light and darkness. I'm both. I heard someone from "the other side" speak, and it made me zoom out – made me see that we all have light and dark sides. I felt guilty for the way I think, the way I feel. But I can't run from myself. I'm both. And this whole world is both. I wrote down five destinations and dove into the one that felt most right for me – Thailand. I ask myself, should I return to Israel or perhaps Australia? That mere thought scares me."

This paragraph captures a psychological and emotional struggle that many trauma survivors, particularly those displaced by conflict or crisis, experience. Here's an expanded interpretation and elaboration of the themes embedded in it: The movement between fear, estrangement, and the urge to escape, and the subsequent emergence of guilt and shame, reflects an emotional pendulum swinging between conflicting needs: the need for safety and distance from a painful reality, and the need for belonging and identity – even if it is tied to a place that no longer feels safe.

David's Circle as a Replacement for Family

Despite the pervasive loss, a somewhat positive theme emerged through the storytelling: the creation of a new form of belonging through David's Circle with other Israelis who experienced similar experiences. Y, for example, told the following story: "So many stories run through your mind, and you try to figure out what's the 'right' story – and what does a 'right story' even mean. I feel like sharing a cosmic seal I received. Before I came to Thailand, I was at a retreat in India. I had been in therapy over the past year, and went through one of the most significant treatments – art therapy. I'm an artist, and this is my field. It was a long journey, and after a particularly meaningful session, I realized I was ready for the next step. That's when the next movement called me to come to Thailand, to Koh Phangan. A friend told me about the magical island, its uniqueness… David's Circle…he said it might help me. At that time in Israel, I felt like I was taking two steps back for every step forward. I understood that the universe itself made every effort to get me here…It was challenging, but eventually, we formed a cosy family…a nest. During one of the workshops, we had a kind of paired therapy with breathing and touch. I felt a release, a clearing of a blockage… I felt the warmth, could cry, hug… we understood each other's pain and suffering, we had gone through similar experiences. I was talking with a guy who told me he had lost a close friend in the war, who keeps visiting him in dreams… The moment we hugged, he felt he had finally let go of his friend goodbye. I felt it, too… I had also lost a close friend at the Nova…sharing it in the circle was kind of a closure… I know why I'm here."

Participants consistently referred to the Circle as a "safe space" or "surrogate family" where they can share, provide, and be provided with understanding and emotional support without judgment or expectation. This symbolic family, formed in a foreign land, provides empathy and a sense of connection that contrasts with their feelings of abandonment. Through creative art expression, shared meals, yoga, and storytelling, many found meaning, purpose, and solidarity with others who had endured similar trauma. The above narrative illustrates how shared trauma and healing practices can foster the emergence of a surrogate, family-like structure among strangers in an unfamiliar environment. The non-stigmatizing, voluntary attendance in the Open Space provided by the David Circle project is akin to a spiritual retreat that allows these survivors an intuitive solution to re-belonging and emotional integration after the rupture of personal and collective trauma.

Discussion

This study explored the role of the David Circle project, operating in Koh Phangan, as a refuge for Israeli survivors of the Nova Festival and reservists who left Israel in the wake of the October 7th trauma. Findings reveal that David Circle functioned as a transformative resonant space, supporting the co-creation of a communal, emotionally safe "nest" with others who had experienced similar trauma.

Participants described profound emotional connections that transcended verbal communication through practices such as paired breathing, storytelling, and shared physical presence. These encounters, marked by mutual recognition, physical closeness, tears, and gratitude, were seen as moments of healing through relational witnessing. In this context,

the concept of an "intimate closed circle" emerged, suggesting a symbolic completion or reconciliation of trauma. Despite the physical openness of the setting (no walls or fixed boundaries), participants experienced emotional containment and safety.

What unfolded was not merely emotional catharsis but a sense of spiritual alignment and renewed clarity regarding one's place in the world. Participation in the David Circle allowed individuals to see and be seen, fulfilling emotional needs typically met by family or long-standing community ties. In the absence of physical home or familial anchors, this newly formed collective of shared experience served as a chosen family, offering emotional support, mirroring, and a reconstitution of fractured identities.

This resonates with broader themes in trauma recovery among displaced or disillusioned young adults (Schultz et al., 2016): the significance of intentional community spaces, where shared language, emotional resonance, and symbolic rituals (such as storytelling or therapeutic touch) facilitate the rebuilding of trust, coherence, and meaning. In this sense, Koh Phangan becomes more than a geographic location; it evolves into a psychological refuge, described by participants as a "safe place" that supports healing and reconnection.

From a theoretical perspective, the experience of estrangement in one's homeland, particularly in the aftermath of war, political disillusionment, or personal loss, can evoke a profound sense of alienation (Palmer et al., 2022). This is not simply about geographic displacement, but about emotional detachment from the state, the society, and even one's previous identity (Wilde, 2022). The urge to escape often arises as a psychological survival mechanism, a way to seek clarity and space when the familiar becomes emotionally suffocating. Such patterns have also been observed in post-conflict societies, such as Syria (Bunn et al., 2023).

Yet, the act of leaving is rarely a psychologically clean process. Once a sense of safety is restored, individuals often face feelings of guilt for leaving others behind, for not fulfilling expected roles, or for experiencing moments of relief while others still suffer. Shame can follow, shaped by internalized cultural or familial narratives that equate departure with betrayal (Hollis et al., 2022) or weakness (Theisen-Womersley, 2021).
The meanings attributed by Nova Festival survivors and reservists to their experiences within The Circle could also be viewed in the broader context of trauma and recovery. Participant narratives revealed a profound existential tension rooted in the fractured sense of belonging following collective trauma. This tension manifested as an internal conflict between staying in one's homeland, now perceived by many as unsafe, and the idea of relocating abroad, which often evokes feelings of disconnection and loss of identity. This existential dilemma, whether to remain in a familiar yet traumatized environment or to seek refuge elsewhere at the cost of cultural and emotional displacement, reflects a deep rupture in the participants' psychological landscape. Is it more painful to remain in a place that feels unsafe, or to live in a foreign land where one may feel rootless and alone? Staying offers familiarity and a sense of identity but may also trigger trauma and mistrust. Leaving may bring relief, but often at the cost of isolation and emotional dislocation. The self becomes suspended between two conflicting realities, neither of which offers full psychological resolution.

This inner conflict is well-documented among trauma survivors, refugees, and individuals confronting post-traumatic disillusionment with their society or nation (Wilde, 2022). It complicates the processes of recovery, identity reconstruction, and the ability to form new attachments. The oscillation between escape and return, between shame and relief, becomes part of the broader narrative of trauma integration. Importantly, the Circle appeared to function as a symbolic counter-space in which the tension between leaving and staying could be held, reflected upon, and shared. It did not resolve the dilemma but allowed it to be acknowledged in a communal, compassionate setting. This act of collective holding may be seen as a first step in re-establishing a fractured sense of coherence and belonging in the aftermath of trauma.

Findings indicate that the communal experience created a symbolic and emotional "land platform," a temporary space of rootedness and safety abroad, that for many became a substitute for the perceived insecurity of Israel. Situated in nature, surrounded by silence and held within a compassionate, non-judgmental atmosphere, the space allowed participants to confront trauma without fear. In this carefully held container, pain could be acknowledged, processed, and witnessed collectively. The environment itself, marked by natural landscapes, calmness, and physical distance from the site of trauma, played a vital therapeutic role. Consistent with eco-psychological theories and trauma-informed approaches, physical immersion in nature can foster regulation of the nervous system and promote psychological resilience (Berger & McLeod, 2006; Jordan & Hinds, 2016). In this sense, David's Circle offered not only physical respite but also a symbolic landscape that enabled emotional anchoring, even in exile. Crucially, the shared cultural and linguistic fabric of the group amplified the healing effect. Participants described the importance of being surrounded by others who spoke "the same language," not merely Hebrew, but the language of trauma, cultural meaning, and shared experience. This cultural mirroring created a sense of recognition and belonging that is fundamental to post-traumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The participants' collective identity as survivors, Israelis, and citizens in crisis allowed for deep emotional resonance and relational witnessing, which are essential conditions for psychological integration (Herman, 1992). Importantly, many participants emphasized the need to distance themselves from Israel to engage in healing and self-renewal fully. However, this departure was not framed as a rejection of the homeland, but as a strategic pause. It reflected a desire to reconstruct the self away from the immediate triggers of trauma, with the long-term vision of returning to contribute meaningfully to society. This finding aligns with the literature on trauma and resilience, which suggests that temporary separation from the context of trauma can facilitate perspective-taking, future planning, and restoration of agency (Bonanno, 2004; Neimeyer, 2001).

Through participation in The David's Circle, individuals began to reimagine a future in which healing and activism were intertwined. Several described an emergent sense of purpose to return to Israel not simply as citizens, but as agents of change. This dynamic of healing abroad and returning with renewed strength can be seen as a narrative of empowered exile, a transformative arc that fosters psychological integration, future orientation, and a renewed sense of social responsibility (Frankl, 2006).

Concluding Comments

This study offers a nuanced exploration of the psychological, existential, and communal dimensions experienced by young Israeli adult survivors of the Nova Festival and IDF reservists who engaged in the David's Circle as part of their post-trauma recovery. Situated in a peaceful natural environment abroad, this informal healing space provided participants with an opportunity to collectively process their trauma, reconnect with their cultural and emotional identities, and reimagine a sense of future and belonging.

Rather than being solely a space of collective mourning, the David's Circle functioned as a seedbed for resilience and meaning-making. Participants were able to express vulnerability without fear, share trauma narratives in culturally resonant ways, and foster a sense of solidarity rooted in shared experience. These processes contributed to psychological integration and a renewed, though often ambivalent, engagement with the idea of returning to Israeli society as agents of change.

The findings raise critical societal questions. The events of October 7th deeply ruptured the foundational belief in Israel as a haven for Jews, a core pillar of national identity since the Holocaust. For these young adults, this rupture has led to a profound crisis of trust in the state, military institutions, and the very notion of national belonging. The study foregrounds the urgent need to address these existential wounds, not only at the individual level but as a collective social project.

Importantly, the research highlights the efficacy of non-clinical, culturally grounded healing spaces in facilitating post-trauma recovery. David's Circle stands as an example of how intentional communal environments can offer emotional containment, belonging, and symbolic restoration, especially for populations that may be disillusioned with institutional support systems. As such, the study contributes to global discourses on trauma recovery, identity reconstruction, and culturally sensitive therapeutic alternatives in post-conflict contexts.

From a Geographical-psychological perspective, the findings of this study suggest that the transformation of Koh Phangan into a global mental health sanctuary may catalyze significant changes in the island's urban culture. While the island has long been known for its party scenes and spiritual retreats, the increasing presence of trauma-informed centers signals a shift toward an integrative well-being infrastructure. This evolution is also rooted in the island's unique resources for recreation and cultural diversity: diving schools, traditional fishing farms, and blended folk traditions shaped by Thai, Burmese, Indian, and Western residents working collaboratively. These elements may help foster a new type of urban culture defined not by high-density construction but by inclusive, healing-centered communities.

Koh Phangan's physical environment – lush jungles, beaches, and slow rhythms – combines with mindful spaces and a long-standing belief in the island's "positive energy" to support emotional regulation and community-based recovery. If this trajectory continues, the island may emerge as a model for trauma-informed urbanism, where infrastructure is built around emotional resilience, cultural coexistence, and ecological sustainability. In this way,

the influx of global trauma survivors may benefit from the island's resources and contribute to reshaping its urban identity into one grounded in care, creativity, and multicultural synergy.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study offers some insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the research was based on a relatively small and self-selecting sample of individuals who chose to participate in David's Circle and were available during the data collection period. As such, the findings may not be representative of Israeli trauma survivors or of those who either remained in Israel post-crisis or relocated. The participants' inclination to engage in communal healing abroad may reflect unique psychological, cultural, or socio-political perspectives not shared by the broader population.

In terms of future research, several promising directions emerge. Longitudinal studies are needed to explore how participation in communal healing spaces, such as The David's Circle, shapes identity, resilience, and civic re-engagement over time. Additionally, research could examine how cultural, spiritual, and environmental elements interact to foster recovery in displaced populations. Comparative analyses between those who remained in Israel and those who sought healing abroad may also offer valuable insights into the diverse trajectories of trauma adaptation.

Finally, future inquiry should continue to explore the deeper questions raised by participants themselves: How can broken trust be restored? What constitutes belonging in a fractured homeland? And how can young people rebuild a sense of "home within the self" when external systems of meaning and safety have collapsed? Addressing these questions is essential not only for therapeutic intervention but also for shaping inclusive, compassionate post-crisis societies.

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Creative Thai Art Learning for Urban Society's Well-being

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Abstract

Lifestyles in crowded, fast-paced urban societies have created conditions that negatively affect physical, mental, and social well-being. This research aimed to develop and implement creative Thai art learning activities to promote well-being in urban communities. A mixed-methods approach was employed in four stages: (1) documentary research and community surveys, including interviews with 5 community leaders and 100 residents in the Rama IV area; (2) development of creative Thai art learning kits; (3) implementation of learning activities with a sample of 500 community residents; and (4) data collection involved satisfaction and well-being assessments and follow-up interviews; the resulting data were then analyzed to assess participant outcomes. The research produced three learning kits: Creative Thai Ornament Drawing, Creative Thai Craft, and Creative Lifestyle Products from Thai Ornaments. Assessment results showed high satisfaction and improved well-being among participants. The research also provided evidence for developing policies that integrate creative Thai art into urban well-being strategies. This includes fostering careers in the creative economy, promoting community-based tourism, preserving cultural heritage, and encouraging collaboration with government agencies to strengthen community networks through the arts.

Keywords: *Creative Thai Art, Urban Well-being, Community-based Art Activity, Cultural Heritage, Art Therapy*

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Introduction

In contemporary urban society, people face crowded living conditions, hectic lifestyles, and intense competition, compounded by the persistent effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors have created unhealthy living environments that negatively impact both physical and mental well-being, leaving many urban dwellers experiencing chronic stress. Recognizing these challenges, Thailand's National Economic and Social Development Plans - both the Twelfth edition (2017-2021) and Thirteenth edition (2022-2026) - have emphasized the importance of improving quality of life, health, and well-being for citizens of all ages (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017; Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2022).

Art-based interventions have emerged as effective tools for enhancing life quality, alleviating stress and anxiety, and strengthening social connections. Thai traditional arts, with their exquisite craftsmanship and intricate designs, represent a valuable cultural heritage that offers multiple benefits. These art forms not only deserve preservation but also hold potential for adaptation into therapeutic activities that promote mental peace and creative expression. Furthermore, they can be developed into innovative products that meet contemporary needs while preserving cultural identity.

The application of Thai arts extends beyond personal well-being to economic benefits. Currently, these traditional art forms are being successfully integrated into tourism initiatives, generating income for families and communities while promoting cultural appreciation. Building on these existing applications, this research aims to develop innovative Thai art learning kits and implement community-based art activities with dual objectives: to restore urban well-being and to enhance career opportunities within Thailand's growing creative economy.

Objectives

1. To develop product prototypes and creative Thai art learning kits aimed at improving well-being in urban society. 2. To implement creative Thai art activities that enhance well-being within urban populations.

Research Questions

1. What forms should the product prototypes and creative Thai art learning kits be in to effectively promote well- being in urban society? 2. How do creative Thai art activities influence well-being in urban society?

Scope of Study

1. Scope of contents: The development of product prototypes and creative Thai art learning activity kits focuses on enhancing urban well-being through the study of significant examples of Thai traditional arts. These include artifacts preserved in national museums and temples across Bangkok and Thailand's central region, as well as existing Thai art forms found in communities surrounding the Rama IV area. The product prototypes and learning kits consist of three main categories:

- Creative Thai Ornament Drawing Learning kits,
- Creative Thai Craft Learning kits, and
- Creative Lifestyle Products from Thai Ornaments Learning Kits.

2. *The scope of areas:* The study focuses on five specific communities in the Rama IV area of Bangkok: Wat Duang Khae, Trok Salak Hin, Charat Mueang, Railway Flat, and Chulalong-korn University.

3. *The Scope of the Sample Groups:*
• For data collection purposes before the development of product prototypes and creative Thai art learning kits, the research subjects include urban residents aged between 19 and 70 years.
• For the implementation of the learning activity kits, the study involves 500 participants from the Rama IV communities who express interest in and are physically prepared to engage in creative Thai art learning activities.

Terminology

1) *Urban Society's Well-being* refers specifically to the well-being of individuals living in urban environments. This research focuses on creating art-based interventions and product prototypes designed to enhance well-being primarily through stress reduction and increased enjoyment. The assessment of urban well-being follows the World Health Organization's Well-being index, adapted to evaluate participants' responses to the art activities and prototypes developed in this study.

2) *Creative Thai Arts Learning* encompasses educational activities centered on traditional Thai arts and crafts, incorporating contemporary creative elements that make them relevant for modern lifestyles. This approach blends cultural preservation with practical applications for daily living.

Related Concepts and Theories

The research project, "Creative Thai Arts Learning for Urban Well-Being," has conducted extensive literature reviews of relevant theories and concepts to establish a solid foundation for developing learning innovations aimed at urban well-being enhancement. The theoretical framework incorporates multiple disciplines including Thai traditional arts, Thai pattern drawing techniques, Thai craftsmanship, lifestyle product design, creative cultural tourism, art therapy principles, public art applications, urban community development as tourist attractions, well-being assessment methodologies, and the intrinsic values of art in community development.

The primary theoretical foundations shaping the creative Thai arts learning activities include:

Thai Traditional Arts

Thai traditional arts represent a delicate and distinctive cultural heritage that reflects the aesthetic sensibilities and lifestyle values of Thai people throughout history. These art forms serve as tangible records of national heritage and historical evolution. Originally, most Thai artistic creations were intended to adorn religious spaces and objects associated with Buddhist practices. Consequently, Thai national arts have developed through the integration of Buddhist philosophy and spiritual beliefs (Buabut, 1970:1-5). Art scholars have systematically classified Traditional Thai arts into four major categories:1) Thai traditional painting, which serves as the foundation for Thai pattern studies including Kranok (ornamental patterns), Naree (human figures), Krabi (monkey figures), and Kacha (elephant and other animal depictions); 2) Thai sculptures, three-dimensional artworks created through molding, carving, casting, and assembling techniques; 3) Thai architecture, encompass-

ing religious structures like pagodas and temples as well as traditional residences; and 4) Handicrafts, functional art objects combining aesthetic and practical purposes (Paknam, 1991; Pothiprasat, 2013; Leksukhum, 2001; Saising, 2013).

Thai Traditional Painting

Thai traditional painting constitutes a significant fine art form with substantial artistic and scholarly value. These paintings provide important insights for studies in religion, history, archaeology, lifestyle evolution, cultural practices, traditional costumes, and regional entertainment forms across different historical periods. As such, Thai paintings serve as visual documentation reflecting national cultural development. Art historians typically classify Thai paintings into three main stylistic categories: linear Thai painting, Monochromatic Thai painting, and Multicolor painting.

Figure 1. Thai Lacquer work, Ayutthaya Period (1350–1767).

Thai lacquer work is a traditional form of decorative art with a long history in Thailand, dating back to ancient times. It was primarily used to adorn furniture, doors, cabinets, and religious artifacts. Known for its intricate designs and glossy, smooth finish, Thai lacquer work is highly valued for its craftsmanship and aesthetic beauty.

A distinctive technique within Thai lacquer work is "Lai Rod Nam," which translates to "designs washed with water." This technique involves applying layers of black lacquer, made from tree resin, onto wood or other surfaces. After the lacquer is applied, artisans cover the surface with gold leaf over a pre-drawn pattern. The gold leaf is then washed away from the unwanted areas, leaving intricate gold designs on the black lacquer background.

Figure 2. Mural Painting, Wat Khongkha Ram Temple, Ratchaburi Province.vThis mural painting from Wat Khongkha Ram Temple in Ratchaburi Province depicts mythical creatures in a dynamic aquatic setting. The central figures are beings with horse heads and fish tails, shown swimming among stylized waves. The overall style reflects traditional Thai art, characterized by intricate detail and imaginative subject matter.

Characteristics and Styles of Thai Traditional Painting
Thai traditional paintings are primarily created using tempera and appear in various forms, such as murals, Buddhist manuscripts, banners, and cabinets. These paintings traditionally depict stories rooted in Buddhist beliefs. The style is typically characterized by flat, colored surfaces, gilding, and finely detailed outline drawings (Intralip, 1994: 1-10). With the influence of Western art, certain characteristics of Thai painting began to evolve. Notable changes include the use of linear perspective to create a sense of pictorial depth, as well as tonal gradation to convey three-dimensionality within the composition.

Applications of Thai Traditional Arts on Creative Products
 Thai traditional arts have been adapted and applied to a wide range of creative products. These adaptations often involve modifying traditional elements to serve new functions that align with contemporary consumer needs. Scholars, artists, designers, and art students have incorporated Thai traditional art into graphic design and product development, commercializing it in various forms such as book illustrations, animations, packaging, and decorative patterns on everyday items like utensils and textiles.

Thai Arts and Well-being
 The relationship between Thai arts and well-being stems from art's ability to contribute to personal development across various dimensions. Well-being represents a state of happiness achieved through balanced mental, physical, and spiritual health, resulting in harmonious relationships between personal aspirations and social connections (White, 2008: 1-2). Art maintains an inseparable connection with society (Barbosa, 1992: 1), possessing both intrinsic artistic value and significant community-level benefits. Guetzkow (2002: 1) identifies three primary ways community art activities positively impact societies: by strengthen-

ing social capital and community cohesion; by improving community image and stimulating local economies; and by providing mental and physical health benefits to participants. Consequently, art serves multiple important functions - as an educational medium that makes learning more engaging when integrated with other disciplines, and as a therapeutic tool that enhances life quality by reducing stress and anxiety.

In the specific context of Thai traditional art, its intricate nature promotes focused attention and cultivates refined aesthetic appreciation among practitioners. Additionally, Thai art activities foster self-esteem development and strengthen interpersonal relationships among participants, ultimately contributing to broader societal well-being. These therapeutic benefits align with established principles of art therapy, which typically progresses through four developmental stages: rapport building, exploration, experiential engagement, and empowerment. Art therapy techniques may incorporate various media including drawing, painting, sculpting, printmaking, and crafts (Rugmai, 2021: 202-204).

Well-being Assessment

Well-being assessment requires specific methodological approaches to ensure validity and reliability. Researchers employ various assessment tools including interviews, questionnaires, checklists, rating scales, and semantic differential techniques (Lawthong, 2018: 150). The World Health Organization has developed a standardized Well-being Index that serves as a quality measurement scale. This assessment tool uses rating-scale questions to measure various well-being indicators including health perceptions, life satisfaction, work concentration, functional capability, and interpersonal relationships (World Health Organization, 2004: 45-48).

This research adapts the WHO assessment methodology, employing participant responses to rating-scale questions as indicators of well-being improvement. The five-level assessment scale ranges from 5 (all the time) to1 (never), measuring frequency of positive well-being experiences across various dimensions.

After the implementation of the Thai art activities, the participants' well-being was analyzed and interpreted using the arithmetic mean. The interpretation of well-being levels is as follows:

An average score of 4.51–5.00 indicates the highest level of well-being.
An average score of 3.51–4.50 indicates a high level of well-being.
An average score of 2.51–3.50 indicates a moderate level of well-being.
An average score of 1.51–2.50 indicates a low level of well-being.
An average score of 1.00–1.50 indicates the lowest level of well-being.

Methodology

This research employed a mixed-methods approach, consisting of the following steps:

Step 1: Data Collection for the Development of Product Prototypes and Creative Thai Art Learning Kits

Data were collected through documentary research, community surveys, interviews with community leaders, and needs analysis. The sample groups consisted of:

- 5 community leaders and coordinators, selected through purposive sampling.
- 100 Rama IV community members, aged between 19 and 70 years, selected through volunteer sampling.

Step 2: Data Analysis and Development of Product Prototypes and Creative Thai Art Learning Kits

The data collected in Step 1 were analyzed to create a walking map and design product prototypes and creative Thai art learning kits aimed at improving the well-being of urban society. Three creative prototypes and learning kits were developed:

- Creative Thai Ornament Drawing Learning Kits
- Creative Thai Craft Learning Kits
- Creative Lifestyle Products from Thai Ornaments Learning Kits

Step 3: Implementation of the Creative Thai Art Learning Kits

An experimental study was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the Creative Thai Art Learning Kits on the well-being of urban residents. Creative Thai art activities were organized for 500 residents in the Rama IV area, including the following communities: Wat Duang Khae, Trok Salak Hin, Charat Mueang, Railway Flat, and the community of students and staff at Chulalongkorn University. Data were collected using well-being and satisfaction assessment forms, as well as interviews conducted with participants after completing the activities.

Step 4: Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected from the pre-experimental study were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, mean, standard deviation, and percentage. The qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis.

Research Results

From the community surveys conducted in the Rama IV area, foundational data were collected to support the creation of a walking map and the development of Thai art product prototypes and Creative Thai Art Learning Kits.

The Rama IV area, located in central Bangkok, comprises several urban communities with diverse social and cultural characteristics. Traditional cultural values remain strong, especially in temple-centered communities such as Wat Duang Khae and Trok Salak Hin. Local religious practices, community ceremonies, and neighborhood festivals continue to play a vital role in shaping cultural identity. Wat Duang Khae temple houses notable examples of Thai traditional art, including murals, high-reliefs sculpture, and distinctive architectural features. In contrast, cultural artifacts found in a shrine within Trok Salak Hin reflect Chinese heritage, fostering a sense of identity and continuity among the Chinese-Thai population. These enduring traditions harmoniously coexist with modern urban influences, which are evident across multiple generations.

Art and creative practices are deeply embedded in these communities. Over the past decade, numerous art initiatives have been implemented, such as community mural projects and collaborative art-making activities involving local residents, volunteer artists, and students. These creative endeavors demonstrate a collective interest in using art as a means of community development, environmental beautification, and social cohesion.
Although some neighborhoods face challenges typical of urban environments, such as limited space and economic constraints, residents exhibit strong community spirit and active participation in local initiatives. The proximity of Chulalongkorn University adds an academic and cultural dynamic to the area. Students and faculty often collaborate with the surrounding communities through research, outreach programs, and artistic activities, contributing to the area's cultural vitality.

Overall, the findings reveal a high level of enthusiasm for art among community members. Residents consistently expressed interest in using art to improve their surroundings and to promote the well-being of individuals and the community as a whole.

Figure 3. Surrounding views of communities in the Rama IV area. The image showcases red lanterns with intricate designs at a Chinese shrine in Trok Salak Hin, a traditional Thai-style building at Wat Duang Khae, and a modern basketball court in the Railway Flat community – illustrating the area's rich cultural heritage and dynamic urban life.

Community Walking Map in Rama IV Area
The community walking map highlights significant locations within the Wat Duang Khae, Trok Salak Hin, Charat Mueang, and Railway Flat communities. These include religious sites, local food stalls, and communal spaces used for organizing activities and events. In addition to serving as a navigational tool, the map also reflects both the traditional and contemporary occupations of residents in each community, providing insight into their cultural and socio-economic contexts.
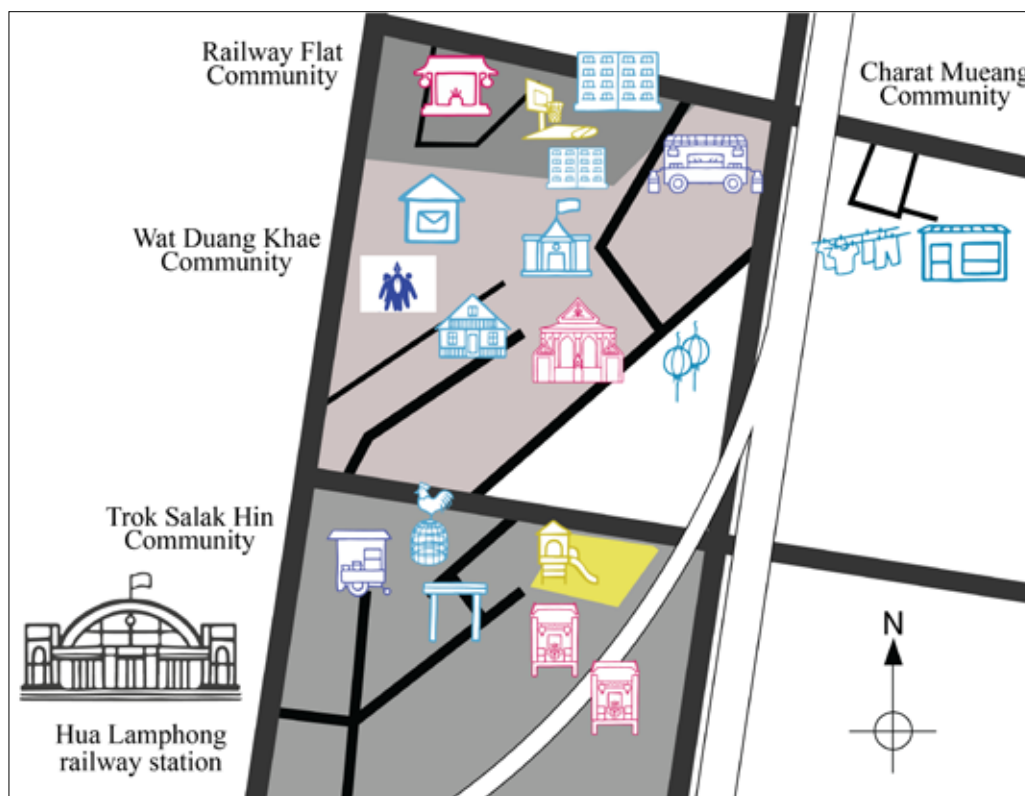
Figure 4. Community walking map in Rama IV area.

Analysis of conditions and pain points of the Community

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with the closure of Bangkok Railway Station (Hua Lamphong), significantly affected the economic and social conditions of the local communities. These events led to a sluggish local economy, rising unemployment, and a sharp decline in household income. As a result, the psychological well-being of residents was adversely impacted, with many experiencing heightened stress levels and reduced social interaction.

Interviews with community leaders and surveys conducted among residents revealed a strong interest in participating in art activities as a means of stress relief and emotional support. Most residents indicated that they were available for such activities on weekends.

In cases where on-site participation was restricted, community members were able to engage through online sessions or learn independently by following video-based instructions. The majority of participants expressed interest in art-based activities such as coloring in painting books, decorating fabric bags, and creating handicrafts using sewing and embroidery techniques.

Problems Affecting the Well-being of the Community

Closure of train services at Hua Lamphong Station

COVID-19

Community Economic Conditions
- More unemployed
- Reduced income
- Epidemics

Well-being
- **Mental Well-being:** Experiences of stress.
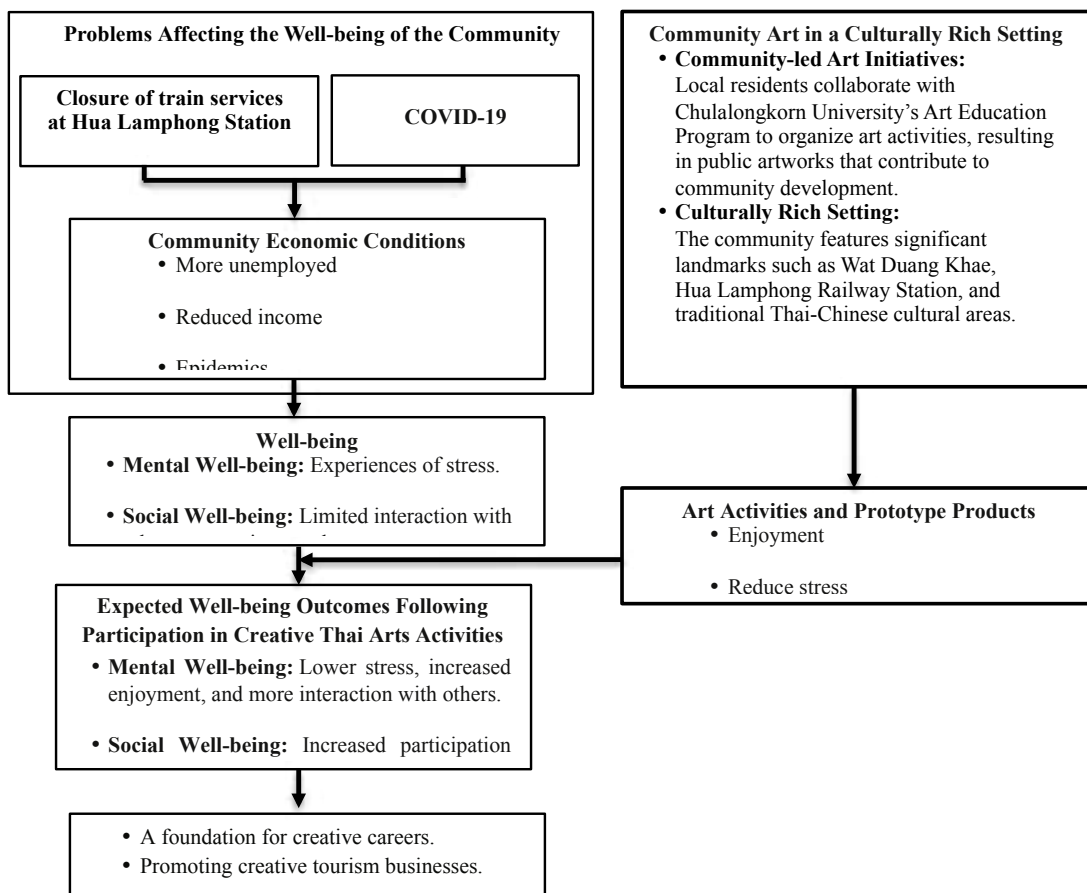- **Social Well-being:** Limited interaction with

Expected Well-being Outcomes Following Participation in Creative Thai Arts Activities
- **Mental Well-being:** Lower stress, increased enjoyment, and more interaction with others.
- **Social Well-being:** Increased participation

- A foundation for creative careers.
- Promoting creative tourism businesses.

Community Art in a Culturally Rich Setting
- **Community-led Art Initiatives:** Local residents collaborate with Chulalongkorn University's Art Education Program to organize art activities, resulting in public artworks that contribute to community development.
- **Culturally Rich Setting:** The community features significant landmarks such as Wat Duang Khae, Hua Lamphong Railway Station, and traditional Thai-Chinese cultural areas.

Art Activities and Prototype Products
- Enjoyment
- Reduce stress

Figure 5. Analysis of conditions and pain points from community surveys.

Results of product prototypes and Learning Activities Development

The development of product prototypes and Creative Thai Art Learning Kits, aimed at enhancing the well-being of urban residents, resulted in three key outputs: 1) Creative Thai Ornament Drawing Learning Kits; 2) Creative Thai Craft Learning Kits; 3) Creative Lifestyle Products from Thai Ornaments Learning Kits.

Figure 6. Three sets of product prototypes and Creative Thai Art Learning Kits.

1) Product Prototypes and Creative Thai Ornament Drawing Learning Kits – introducing traditional Thai motifs through drawing-based activities. The kit includes three themed drawing books: Beginning Thai Drawing, Imaginative Land, and Bangkok: A Creative Community.
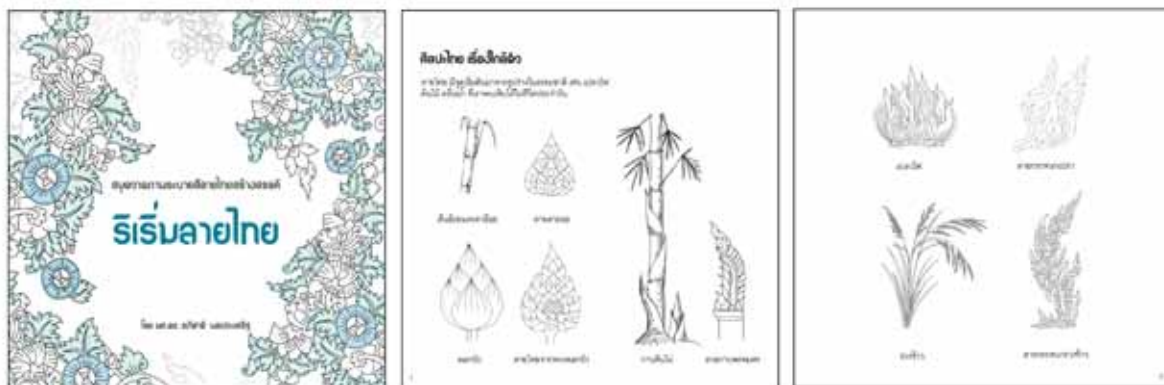

Figure 7. Drawing and Coloring Book 1: "Beginning Thai Drawing" introduces the origins and four main categories of traditional Thai art – Kanok, Naree, Krabi, and Khacha – through introductory explanations and simple activities for practicing drawing and coloring traditional Thai motifs.

Figure 8. Drawing and coloring book 2: "Imaginative Land" is a coloring and image-completion book that combines the traditional artistry of ancient Thai painting with modern imagination. The main illustrations are inspired by the scenes and mythical creatures of the Himmapan celestial forest – a mythical realm from Thai literature, filled with fantastical creatures and symbolic imagery.

Figure 9. Drawing and coloring book 3: "Bangkok: A Creative Community" is a coloring and image-completion book that showcases the beauty of notable locations in Bangkok – such as Hua Lamphong Railway Station, a mix of modern and traditional architecture in communities around the Rama IV area, and other charming and culturally rich places throughout the city.

2) Product prototypes and creative Thai Craft Learning Kits – featuring hands-on activities that emphasize sewing and ornamentation techniques. The kit includes: 1) *Auspicious Embroidery Activity* – an embroidery set for decorating small bags; 2) *Lucky Knot Weaving Activity* – a rope-knotting set for creating symbolic Thai knots; 3) *Mindfulness Beading Activity* – a bead-ing set for making decorative straps for medical masks.

Figure 10. Product prototypes and Creative Thai Craft Learning Kits.

3) Creative Lifestyle Products from Thai Ornaments Learning Kits – applying traditional Thai patterns to contemporary lifestyle products. The kit consists of three main activities: 1) *Rama IV Community Creative Souvenir Activity* – designing cloth bags printed with outline il-lustrations that represent each community's identity; 2) *Rama IV Community "New Normal" Healthcare Activity* – decorating face masks and alcohol spray containers with community-themed stickers; 3) **Rama IV Community Creative Tourism Activity** – decorating postcards and coloring a community walking map as a means of cultural engagement.

Figure 11. Creative Lifestyle Products from Thai Ornaments Learning Kits.

Results of Participation in Creative Thai Art Activities

Following the implementation of the Creative Thai Art Learning Kits with 500 community members, survey results indicated a high level of participant satisfaction (x = 4.37, S.D. = 0.588). Participants expressed particularly high satisfaction with the quality of materials and media used in the activities (x = 4.44, S.D. = 0.699). Moreover, their appreciation for the cultural value of Thai arts and crafts increased as a result of their participation.

In terms of well-being, post-activity evaluations revealed that participants' overall well-being was rated at a high level (x = 4.33, S.D. = 0.632). Many participants reported experiencing a strong sense of pride and enhanced self-esteem after completing the activities. A majority also expressed interest in continuing the activities on a regular basis.

Participants recommended expanding the program to include additional activities, such as crafting necklaces, designing shirts with local motifs, creating community murals to foster self-expression through color, and establishing check-in spots at culturally significant locations within the community.

Figure 12. Implementation of the Creative Thai Art Learning Kits at the Foundation for Child Development, located near Wat Duang Khae, Trok Salak Hin, Charat Mueang, and the Railway Flat community. The foundation typically serves as a hub for various activities within the surrounding communities.

Figure 13. Implementation of the Creative Thai Art Learning Kits was carried out across the Rama IV area, with the intention of minimizing the risk of COVID-19 exposure. The research team collaborated with community representatives to distribute the kits and share knowledge with members of the target communities, encouraging them to engage in the activities in small groups or with family members.

When analyzed by age groups, the results of the participants' well-being and their opinions toward the activities are as follows:

1. Participants Under 25 Years Old:
The results of the well-being analysis indicated a high level (x = 4.25, S.D. = 0.848). Participants in this age group reported that they liked the flexibility of the activity, which allowed them to choose their own colors and designs. They didn't have to worry about making mistakes, which gave them the freedom to make their own decisions. They
used the activity as a way to take a break from stressful thoughts and to focus on the present moment, which helped relieve anxiety related to the pandemic.

2. Participants Aged 26–35 Years Old:
The results of the well-being analysis indicated a high level (x = 4.45, S.D. = 0.615). Participants in this age group stated that the activity was practical, easy to do, and genuinely useful. They appreciated the incorporation of auspicious stories and Thai patterns, describing it as both charming and modern. They felt that it could inspire the creation of products reflecting the community's unique identity and help generate income.

3. Participants Aged 36–45 Years Old:
The results of the well-being analysis indicated a high level (x = 4.29, S.D. = 0.742). Participants in this age group felt that the activity was easy to follow, with simple steps, while still allowing them to think creatively. They also valued the opportunity to spend quality time with their families.

4. Participants Aged 46–55 Years Old:
The results of the well-being analysis indicated a high level (x = 4.30, S.D. = 0.785). Participants in this age group felt that the activities effectively blended traditional Thai patterns with modern elements and incorporated cultural beliefs. This made them enthusiastic about using the finished products.

5. Participants Over 55 Years Old:
The results of the well-being analysis indicated a high level (x = 4.50, S.D. = 0.611). Participants in this age group felt that the activity provided a welcome break for people in urban communities, who often have limited free time and are constantly working. It offered relaxation and positively impacted family life. Members of the household felt happier and more at ease, which helped strengthen family bonds and enhanced the livability of the community. One suggestion for future development was to create larger tote bags suitable for community use, such as for grocery shopping or carrying personal belongings.

Discussion
Based on the outcomes of developing creative Thai art product prototypes and implementing art activities for urban residents in the Rama IV area, three major aspects of well-being were identified and are discussed as follows:

1. Social Well-Being
The art activities played a significant role in enhancing the social well-being of the community. Although the population is diverse and each community, such as Wat Duang Khae, Trok Salak Hin, Charat Mueang, and Railway Flat, has distinct characteristics, they share a collective goal of improving community well-being through the expression of cultural identity.

Several projects and initiatives organized in the Rong Mueang area reflect this mission. Key factors contributing to these efforts include strong community leadership, support from external organizations, partnerships with development networks, and, most importantly, the active participation and commitment of local residents.

This observation is supported by Boonruangsak and Iem-On (2018: 68), who assert that community well-being is best achieved through a systematic, structured approach in which local leaders serve as catalysts. Similarly, Pru Krathok (2015: 238) emphasizes that community well-being is driven by social capital, internal potential, cultural harmony, strong social networks, and collaborative leadership within urban communities.

The research finding also echoes Bussakorn Binson's call for integrating the arts into community care. While her editorial specifically focuses on the elderly, she emphasizes that the arts play a vital role in enriching lives and revitalizing the spirit of urban communities. This perspective supports the broader application of creative art activities to promote well-being in diverse urban settings. (Binson, 2024)

2. Emotional and Mental Well-Being
The product prototypes and Creative Thai Art Learning Kits were developed by drawing on both national artistic heritage, such as Thai ornamental patterns found in historic sites, and insights from local community surveys that revealed the unique identity of the area.

These designs became central to the art activities, which guided participants through step-by-step processes: from learning to draw simple Thai motifs, to coloring intricate designs, creating handicrafts, and producing lifestyle products and souvenirs.

Embroidery kits also featured auspicious symbols associated with good fortune and prosperity, further connecting the art-making process to the cultural beliefs of participants. This thoughtful integration of identity, creativity, and cultural meaning fostered a sense of pride, enjoyment, and emotional fulfillment among community members.

These findings align with the research of Tymoszuk et al. (2021: 1), who concluded that participating in art activities can improve social connectedness, reduce symptoms of depression, and enhance overall well-being. Pöllänen (2015: 58) similarly found that handicraft activities among women aged 19 to 84 provided a meaningful outlet that improved both mental and physical health. Notably, Kaimal et al. (2017: 81) observed that art therapists in the United States are increasingly drawn to craft-based activities due to their therapeutic effectiveness, especially in promoting self-esteem and relaxation.

3. Economic Well-being

The Rama IV community network encompasses culturally rich areas with distinctive identities and landmarks, including Wat Duang Khae Temple, Chinese shrines, Hua Lamphong Railway Station, and traditional Thai-Chinese cultural enclaves. These features offer strong potential as sources of inspiration for the design of craft products and tourist experiences that contribute to the local creative economy.

This research has developed product prototypes and art learning kits that promote skill development in arts and crafts while supporting income generation through creative tourism. The incorporation of local cultural motifs into these products adds authenticity and marketability, both of which are key to sustaining economic well-being.

Mancini (2005: 15) emphasizes that local identity is essential for the tourism sector, as visitors seek distinctive and culturally resonant experiences. Morgan (2001: 10-11) adds that local crafts, souvenirs, and handmade goods are powerful attractions that draw tourists and support local livelihoods. According to Kuntaja (2014: 88-89), the success of cultural tourism also depends on collaboration between residents, community networks, and institutional partners. Establishing learning centers that host workshops and facilitate skills-sharing is a strategy that enhances sustainability and participation. In line with this, the current project not only provided skill-based activities but also produced a practical guidebook for organizing arts and crafts workshops. This guide supports community centers in continuing the work in collaboration with their networks, thereby strengthening long-term economic and cultural sustainability.

Research Limitations

The implementation of the Creative Thai Art Learning Kits to the target groups took place during the COVID-19 outbreak, when the Thai government enforced public health measures to minimize the risk of viral transmission. As a result, the research team had to adjust the planned activities accordingly. The number of locations and the frequency of events involving large gatherings were reduced to minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure. In an effort to resolve this issue, the research team assigned community representatives

who attended the on-site activities to distribute the learning kits, transfer the knowledge to members of the target communities, and encourage them to engage with the activities individually or in small groups. Although the activities, data collection, and well-being assessments successfully covered the targeted areas and reached the planned number of 500 participants, the researchers had fewer opportunities to directly observe and interact with participants compared to normal circumstances.

Conclusion

The outcomes of this project demonstrate not only immediate benefits in social, emotional, and economic well- being but also point toward longer-term impacts. By embedding cultural knowledge in community-led creative activities, the project contributes to the preservation of intangible heritage and strengthens a shared sense of identity among diverse urban populations. Furthermore, the integration of arts-based approaches into local development offers a model that can be adapted and applied in other communities and can inform policy, particularly in areas related to cultural education, public health, and sustainable urban revitalization.

It is also worth noting that the project demonstrated an effective approach for conducting community-based activities under restricted conditions, such as public health regulations during the COVID-19 outbreak, by decentralizing facilitation through trained local representatives – a strategy that maintained participation and ensured continuity despite limitations on in-person gatherings.

Suggestions

Suggestions for Application of Research Results

- When designing products and activities for communities, designers and educators should take into account the specific needs and willingness of community members to participate. Consideration should also be given to the local social context, traditional knowledge, and available materials.
- Facilitators of creative Thai art learning activities should schedule sessions at times that are convenient for community members and ensure that the activities can be completed within the given timeframe. Individual differences such as age, skill level, and personal aptitude should also be taken into consideration to support successful participation.
- For classroom implementation, educators should allocate adequate time for students to complete the assigned tasks and adopt flexible evaluation methods to accommodate diverse learning styles and paces.

Suggestions for Policy Development

- Creative Thai art learning activities should be integrated into initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of life and well-being of youth and all members of urban communities.
- These activities should be utilized as tools to develop practical skills among urban populations, contributing to career development and the promotion of the creative economy.
- Creative Thai art initiatives should be incorporated into community-based tourism strategies to help stimulate local tourism industries. 2.4 Art learning activities can

serve as a medium for strengthening relationships and collaboration between community networks and nearby educational institutions.

Suggestions for Further Study

• Future research should focus on developing creative products and learning activities with commercial potential, in collaboration with government agencies responsible for urban community development, to enhance communities' economic well-being. 3.2 Additional studies should aim to design and evaluate creative Thai art learning activities tailored to students across various educational levels, supporting both cultural learning and skill development.

Acknowledgments

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Lakhon Rong Songs of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe

(Mae Bunnak Kanlayanamit) & the Phenomenon of Music in Siam

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Abstract

This study examines the evolution of lakhon rong, a form of Thai musical theater, within the context of Siam's socio-political and cultural changes during the early 20th century, particularly under the influence of Western modernization. The research focuses on the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe, exploring how adaptations in lakhon rong performances reflected and contributed to the broader societal efforts towards crafting a modern Thai identity. The integration of Western musical elements with traditional Thai forms exemplifies strategic cultural negotiation, aligning with theories of adaptation and appropriation. Through an analysis of play scripts and historic recordings, this study highlights how cultural practices are dynamically redefined in response to global influences, thus offering insights into the mechanisms of cultural resilience and innovation in non-colonized contexts.

Keywords: *Adaptation, Cultural Negotiation, Lakhon Rong, Thai Musical Theater, Western Influence*

Introduction

During the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), there were significant changes in the political, economic, and social structures of Siam, along with an expansion of education (Amornpradubkul 2023; Arphattananon, 2020; Kasetsiri, 2022). At that time, Western culture had a significant presence, played a role in elite society and had begun to influence everyday lives (Stengs, 2020). In those days, adopting Western culture was seen as necessary due to the prevailing influence of colonialism, and cultural adaptation was needed to align with Western values to reduce marginalization on the international stage. This hybridized Western-Thai culture thus became a preference among the affluent class at the time. This attitude directly affected tastes in Thai theatrical entertainment and led to the creation of new theatrical genres (Chonchirdsin, 2009). Lakhon rong (a Thai singing drama or form of musical theater) emerged as one such genre (Jungwiwattanaporn, 1999). Lakhon rong was a new form of performance during the reign of King Chulalongkorn, innovated by Prince Narathip Praphanphong. It derived inspiration from Malay opera and European comic opera, which had a tremendous influence on Thai theatrical performances and were embraced among the upper class and, latterly, the populace. Additionally, this form of performance also evolved from Thai opera-oriented dance drama performances.

Origins of Lakhon Rong

The term lakhon rong is occasionally, and erroneously used as a synonym of lakhon phanthang, a hybrid genre of Thai-Western opera mixing Thai traditional and western music in the 1930s (Sawangchot, 2021). Ratnin (1996) suggests that the two are distinctive due to the diminished importance of dance in lakhon rong, which had always been the heart of Siamese traditional dramas like lakhon phanthang. Actually, the origins of lakhon rong are earlier. In 1890, during his tour of the Malay Peninsula, King Chulalongkorn observed a Malay theater performance known as bangsawan (Malay Opera) (Fine Arts Department, 2012: 84). This bangsawan was a new form of theater that had emerged around 1880 and was considered an activity of the aristocratic class (Tan Sooi Beng, 1997). Bangsawan was later performed in the capital at a theater near the Burapha Palace, allowing the people of the capital to experience the Malay theater of bangsawan (Fine Arts Department, 2012: 84). Simultaneously, in 1891, King Chulalongkorn instructed his half-brother Prince Damrong Rajanubhab along with Thai nobleman Chaophraya Thewet Wongwiwat to visit Europe to meet Tsar Nicholas II. During this journey, they had the opportunity to attend opera performances. Upon returning, they recounted about the opera, particularly about the music, singing, and staging (Rajanubhab, 2003). These experiences drove the integration of ancient Siamese orchestral music with Western influences and the creation of a new theatrical form involving orchestrated music and singing styles that harmonized, yet without fully adopting the format of a complete Western-style opera. It is from these two disparate sources that lakhon rong originates (Mahasarinand et al., 2016).

Around 1905 began an era of experimentation in Thai musical drama, pioneered by Prince Narathip. Drawing inspiration from bangsawan, which itself had been adapted from grand opera, and influenced by ancient Siamese theatrical styles which had by now absorbed Western influences, a new and modern performance style termed lakhon rong was developed (Jirajarupat, 2014; Vasinarom, 2006). This innovation directly influenced the cultural entertainment tastes in Thailand, marking an era of trial and error, and forming a foundational audience starting from the royal court and spreading to the general populace, known as the Pridalai Troupe (Witayasakpan, 1992). This became a highly popular new form of entertainment. The Pridalai Troupe attracted many actors to train and Worawan Palace

(the palace of Prince Narathip) served as its base, becoming a school for teaching lakhon rong, passing down the art of performing and singing from one generation to the next. The songs performed by the Pridalai Troupe also became templates that were passed down to many actors within the troupe, who branched out to form their own groups, performing at independent venues (Hin-on, 2021). Mae Bunnak Kanlayanamit emerged as a lead performer for the newly formed Pramothai Troupe from 1911 to 1920, which continued using the performance styles of the Pridalai Troupe but modernized its presentation methods (Nakpi, 2014: 62). After World War I, as films began playing a role in Thai society, audiences increasingly favored movies over lakhon rong, leading to the decline and eventual closure of the Pramothai Troupe in 1920 (Tungtang, 2011). Consequently, Mae Bunnak established her own lakhon rong troupe, called Nakhon Bantoeng. She adapted ideas and experiences from the Pridalai and Pramothai troupes for her own troupe (Amatyakul and Kitkan, 2010: 22).

Through the performances of Nakhon Bantoeng, lakhon rong regained popularity, in turn becoming a model for new forms of performance. Mae Bunnak not only incorporated the theatrical elements of lakhon rong into performances but also made some improvements by tailoring this performance style to different contexts and the needs of people in society. It became a significant part of the entertainment culture from the 1930s to 1950s, especially when foreign films were banned during World War II (Tungtang, 2011). Apart from that, a reservoir of knowledge became stored in the composition of lakhon rong scripts, the performance of those plays, and song recording through methods of imitation, adoption, adaptation and refinement to be compatible with changing social contexts. This adaptability ensured that the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe remained popular. In fact, 126 play scripts of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe have been conserved, each of the plays comprising many episodes and volumes, totaling 257 issues (Hin-on, 2018). Such an exhaustive list is crucial academic information in the area of music, exhibiting new dimensions which may not have yet emerged in the field. In addition, gramophone records of lakhon rong songs of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe were found, totaling 210 sides. A significant number of the songs were recorded and serve as valuable evidence, establishing a link between the history of music and the recording industry of lakhon rong songs. More importantly, they vividly portray the entertainment culture during that period. For these reasons, the present study seeks to examine the lakhon rong songs of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe (Mae Bunnak Kanlayanamit) and the musical phenomenon through the play scripts and the gramophone records. In particular, it focuses on investigating the significant features of the songs, especially elements relevant to lakhon rong, and the influences and social phenomena engendering the development and evolution of the lakhon rong performance style. Explicitly, the three primary research objectives are: 1) to analyze the significant features of the songs in lakhon rong play scripts of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe (Mae Bunnak Kanlayanamit); 2) to investigate the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe's incorporation of the lakhon rong songs; 3) to examine the musical phenomenon and the troupe's adaption of the lakhon rong songs in connection with the Thai entertainment culture.

Literature Review
The emergence and development of lakhon rong during the reign of King Chulalongkorn provide a compelling case study of cultural hybridization under the pressures of Western colonialism and modernization. As Siam navigated the complexities of international politics and cultural identity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Western influence permeated its societal structures, prompting a blend of Thai and Western cultural elements.

This era was also marked by Thailand's efforts to modernize its military and government institutions, mirroring the transformations seen in its cultural productions (Ferrara, 2015). This period of transformation was marked by significant adaptations within the realms of politics, social norms, and cultural practices, as the Siamese elite sought to forge a modern national identity that both embraced and resisted Western norms. Theatrical arts, particularly the innovation of lakhon rong, epitomized this blend (Yamprai, 2011). These artistic developments occurred alongside major infrastructural changes, including the introduction of railways and modern education systems, which facilitated both the physical and ideological spread of lakhon rong (Subrahmanyan, 2013). This hybridization process not only mirrored societal shifts but also facilitated a unique space for cultural negotiation and redefinition, as discussed by scholars like Homi Bhabha (2015) and Stuart Hall (1993), who explore the dynamics of cultural identity in post-colonial contexts.

Within the broader spectrum of Thai musical theater, lakhon rong represents an evolution from traditional forms such as khon and likay, which were deeply rooted in Thai mythology and royal patronage. By incorporating Western musical styles and narrative forms, lakhon rong offered a new aesthetic and cultural experience that appealed to both the aristocracy and the burgeoning middle class, reflecting broader trends in Asian theatrical adaptations (Brandon, 2009; Cohen, 2014). Theatrical development in Thailand was also influenced by regional styles, such as Javanese Wayang and Chinese opera, highlighting a rich tapestry of cultural exchange and adaptation that was prevalent across Southeast Asia during this period (Cohen, 2007; Miller, 2010). This intercultural borrowing was a strategic adaptation to the changing tastes and socio-political demands of the time, such as the growing nationalist movements which began to seek expressions of Thai identity that could coexist with Western modernity (Laochockchaikul and Ratnatilaka Na Bhuket, 2023). Such intercultural borrowing was not merely imitative but a strategic adaptation to the changing tastes and socio-political demands of the time, illustrating the fluid nature of cultural identity and the role of performance art in its continual renegotiation.

The theoretical perspectives of adaptation and appropriation provide valuable lenses through which to view the evolution of lakhon rong in this context. Drawing on the work of Sanders (2006) and Hutcheon (2006), the adaptation of lakhon rong can be seen as a dynamic process that involves both the selective incorporation of foreign elements and the transformation of existing cultural practices to meet new social realities. This process is emblematic of a broader cultural negotiation that occurs in many post-colonial societies, where adaptation serves as both a survival strategy and a form of resistance (Jirajarupat and Rattanachaiwong, 2020). Although Thailand was never formally colonized, its strategic adaptations to Western influence reflect a unique form of cultural resilience and negotiation akin to those in post-colonial contexts, underscoring the relevance of these theories even in non-colonized nations (Van Esterik, 2020). The interplay between adaptation and appropriation in lakhon rong highlights the delicate balance between embracing globalization and maintaining cultural integrity, a theme that resonates across various forms of artistic expression in modernizing societies. The adoption of Western musical elements in lakhon rong was thus not merely aesthetic but also a deliberate act of cultural diplomacy, projecting a modern yet distinctly Thai identity. The lakhon rong scripts reflect these methods of adaptation through new presentations and the transformation of literature that has been modified in various presentation forms (Duangpatra 2020).

In the study of historic recordings, researchers apply a variety of methodologies, such as Amatayakul and Kitkan (2010), Wells (2010), Yampolsky (2013), and Mitchell (2017) and explore the linked concepts of discography - the study of data from record labels - and discology - the study of data within records. These frameworks hold potential for the exploration of the musical content and elements of lakhon rong songs. As Katz and Wedell (1977) highlight, the advent of recording technology has not only preserved the musical heritage of Thailand but also transformed its production, distribution, and reception. For lakhon rong, gramophone records have been instrumental in documenting and popularizing this theatrical form, enabling it to reach a wider audience and play a pivotal role in the cultural preservation of the art form while introducing it to new influences and modifications. This technological shift has extended the life of lakhon rong beyond live performances and facilitated a new form of cultural transmission that has significantly impacted how these performances are conceived, executed, and experienced, underlining the intricate relationship between technological advancement and cultural adaptation.

Research Methodology

The present study was intended to investigate the features and analyze the list of songs incorporated in the lakhon rong scripts, the song recording, and the attributes of Bunnak Kanlayanamit's lakhon rong songs through the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe's gramophone records. Furthermore, it explored the incorporation of the lakhon rong songs as well as identified the styles and the principles of selecting the songs in the play scripts. The data were further synthesized to establish a link with the social context in the past; in particular, this was based on evidence of historical documents which could depict the musical phenomenon, reflecting the Thai entertainment culture in the past.

This study was carried out through qualitative research. Specifically, it adopted a historical approach and a documentary research method to analyze data from historical documents, spanning primary sources and secondary sources, including lakhon rong scripts, gramophone records, historical writings, dissertations related to the musical phenomena, and other useful national and international sources of relevant information. The collection of lakhon rong scripts was conducted through research at the following institutions: 1) Naradhip Centre for Research in Social Sciences; 2) National Library of Thailand; 3) Musicology Hermitage, College of Music, Mahidol University. For the collection of gramophone records, coordination was carried out with various organizations, and data was gathered from the following sources: 1) King Rama IX Music Library; 2) National Library of Thailand; 3) Musicology Hermitage, College of Music, Mahidol University; 4) The Government Public Relations Department Gramophone Record Library; 5) Private collections of gramophone records; 6) YouTube; 7) Endangered Archives: Sounds of Siam, Australia. Interview data were obtained through formal and informal interviews conducted with groups of experts in three different areas, including gramophone records, music, and lakhon rong. The results are presented through descriptive analysis in accordance with the objectives of the study.

Results

According to the account of Poonpit Amatayakul (Personal Communication, 8 February 2021), Mae Bunnak Kanlayanamit was trained in lakhon ram (dance drama) and lakhon rong (sung drama) by M.L. Tuan Sri Worawan, and eventually became a skilled and well-known performer, especially recognized for her leading male roles. In addition to her acting

talent, she also absorbed and learned playwriting and song composition from M.L. Tuan Sri Worawan. A recording from the Thai Music Teachers' Program recounts that Mae Bunnak had a melodious voice, which led to her being cast in lead male roles in the lakhon rong performances of the Preedalai troupe. As a performer within the Pridalai Troupe, Mae Bunnak familiarized herself with and acquired knowledge of composing lakhon rong songs, incorporating the songs, and performing lakhon rong styles from Prince Narathip and M.L. Tuan Sri Worawan. With the disbandment of the Pridalai Troupe, she emerged as a lead performer for the Pramothai Troupe and was in charge of overseeing its management. As a result of the business stagnation of the troupe and its cessation, she formed her own troupe named Nakhon Bantoeng in 1920. Historical evidence recording the performance of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe comprises lakhon rong scripts documented with years of performance during 1920-1931, except for the year 1927 in which no play scripts were found. This spans over 11 years during which the troupe thrived on the stage, performing lakhon rong amidst the emerging trend of the film industry. Nevertheless, the troupe continuously produced performances and earned recognition in society, a sample of which can be heard by following the QR Code in Figure 1 below. The prominence of the troupe is evident in its composition of play scripts and the enactment of these plays to raise funds for local bridge construction, philanthropic endeavors such as kathin ceremonies, events showcases such as New Year's celebrations and amusement park openings, and the recording of gramophone records for commercial distribution. Figure 2 is an excerpt from the play The Bond of Vengeance, written and with songs composed by Mae Bunnak Kalayanamit. These materials demonstrate Mae Bunnak Kalayanamit's talents in playwriting, song composition, and vocal performance and portray the values of the entertainment culture practiced among people in society during that period in which they continued to appreciate the lakhon rong performances of the Nakhon Bantoeng troupe. Still, irrespective of its endeavor to adapt to the social trend, the troupe was unable to withstand people's preference for motion pictures, thereby leading to dwindling interests for its performances and eventual closure.

Figure 1. QR Code to a gramaphone audio recording on YouTube of Waansonsieng by Bunnak Kanlayanamit (1930). Waansonsieng (เพลงหวานซ่อนเสียง). Gramophone Record of Tra Siam. Source: Kanlayanamit, 1930; Mitchell, 2019.

Figure 2. An excerpt from the play, *The Bond of Vengeance,* written and with songs composed by Mae Bunnak Kanlayanamit. The script is a translation of *Love's Dilemma* by Charles Gavice. Source: Kanlayanamit, 1923.

According to the thesis Ethnomusicology: A Case Study of Ban Banglampoo by Narong Khianthongkul (1999), it is recounted that the Bang Lamphu music ensemble played a significant role in accompanying lakhon rong performances for Mae Bunnak. The ensemble was regularly led by Khru Sook, who was highly skilled in providing musical accompaniment for theatrical performances. Moreover, Khru Sook's daughters (Khru Chueam, Khru Chaemchoi, Khru Chom, and Khru Thassanee) would often cross the canal to watch Mae Bunnak's performances, and at times participated as backing vocalists (luk khru), for which they received payment and greatly enjoyed the experience. Additionally, in a broadcast of the Meeting with Thai Music Teachers program, Poonpit Amatayakul noted that Luang Chan Choeng Ranat and Khru Montri Tramote contributed to the music for several of Mae Bunnak's theatrical productions. At the same time, records show the names of musicians who recorded gramophone discs for Mae Bunnak. Among them was Phra Phleng Phairo (Som Suwatit), whose work appears on Odeon label discs, including a 40-page recording of Arab Rasami. An advertisement disc under the Rabbit Label reveals that Khru Phrom Phatyakun provided musical accompaniment for several of Mae Bunnak's lakhon rong productions. These include The Royal Chronicle of Thao Thep Kasattri (spelled as in the play script), The Heart of the Minister, Lady Khmer, and Rachathirat (Figure 3).
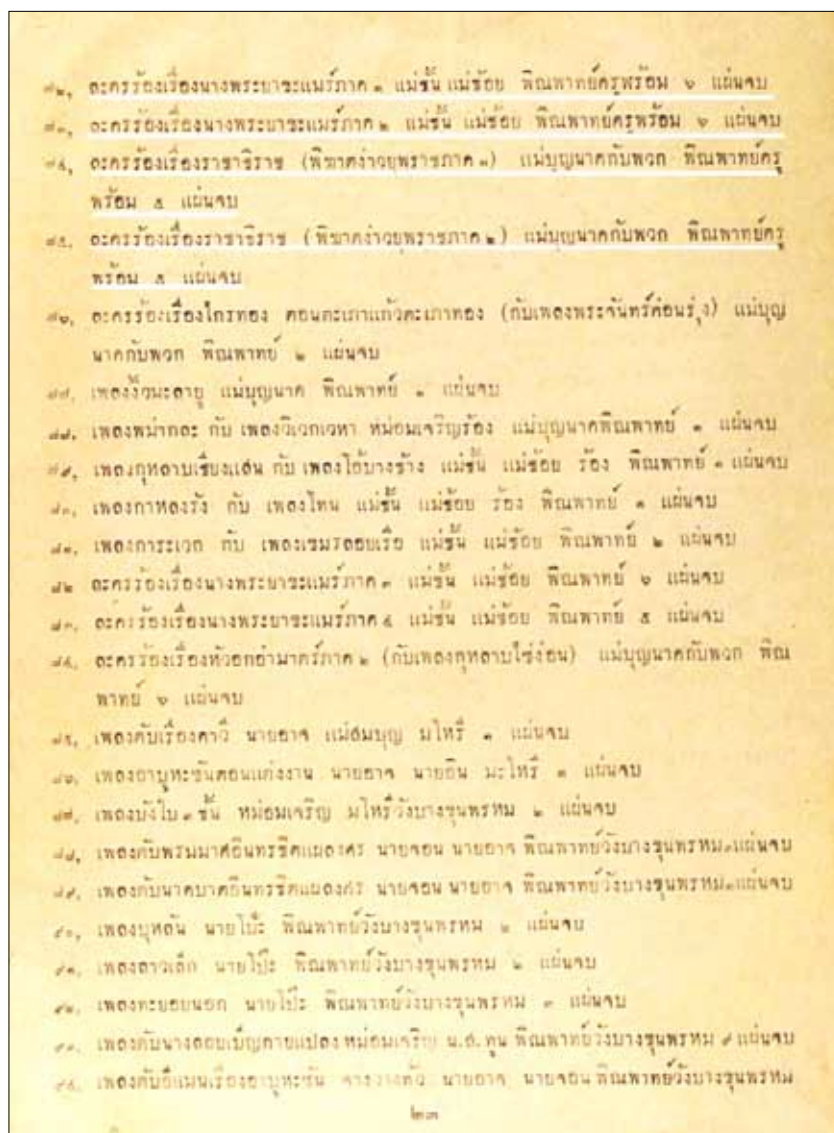
Figure 3. List of Songs from Kratai Label Record No. 1. Source: Khianthongkul, 1999.

Songs in Lakhon Rong Scripts of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe

The songs utilized in lakhon rong plays perform a prominent role since they articulate narratives, emotions, and connotative meanings of the characters. The results of song analysis demonstrated that the play scripts contained miscellaneous musical pieces, namely *Kred Sam Chan, Kred Song Chan, and Kred Chan Diew.* Such pieces were included in the performances of Khon (a masked dance drama) and plays and had been extensively incorporated into lakhon rong scripts. However, considering that lakhon rong was a novel form of performance incorporating Western influences at the time, the musical styles were changed and developed with melodies adapted to lakhon rong scripts (Mookdamuang and Pidokrajt, 2024; Premananda and Phrom-indra, 2024). The influence of other musical styles brought about the new 'musical language' of lakhon rong song, "whereby rhythmic and melodic elements from other musical system and traditions have been incorporated into Thai classical songs (known as *Pleng Thai Daem*)" (Kanchanapradit, 2018: 372).

Accordingly, this contributed to the emergence of increasingly varied musical arrangements tailored to the narratives of the characters. Simply put, the melodies were trimmed or improved to achieve conciseness and ensure compatibility with the play. These song titles are concluded with the words 'trimmed' and 'new.' Alternatively, where modification and refinement of the melodies occurred, the song titles capture a variety of emotions and enable ethnic diversity among the characters. The word 'modified' is added to the titles of these songs to serve as a symbol of the modified melodies.

Simultaneously, a naphat piece as instrumental music was employed as an accompaniment to actions and expression of emotions among performers, just as background music used in Khon and play performances. However, the performance style of lakhon rong is different. In lakhon rong, dance movements were not utilized to deliver lines, so a naphat piece was included to accompany gestures or actions and simple emotions. In particular, typical naphat pieces were ot, employed to express the characters' feeling of sorrow or act of crying, choet and phraya doen used to represent their act of walking, tra non accompanied the act of sleeping, and sen lao represented their drinking or intoxication from alcohol. This reflected the use of musical pieces to convey a variety of actions and emotions in sync with the characters, unlike Khon which incorporates more sophisticated naphat pieces into its performances.

The essential feature of songs or pieces used in lakhon rong plays lies in the fact that the songs were composed for theatrical usage. Specifically, they were characterized by different forms, namely Thai songs, dialect songs, adaptations of foreign melodies, and composition of new foreign melodies with inspiration from military music. Lakhon rong songs, in fact, depicted a variety of narratives and ethnic diversity among the characters in plays. At the same time, they made a significant contribution to enhancing the enjoyment of the performance, stimulating imagination, portraying events, expressing emotions, indicating ethnicity, and narrating the stories of lakhon rong.

The analysis of musical pieces incorporated in 126 lakhon rong scripts, 257 copies in total, and discovered a total of 10,090 songs. With the exclusion of duplicate entries, there remained 1,373 songs featured in lakhon rong. These songs can be classified below:

1. Pleng Kred (เพลงเกร็ด): Featured were 687 musical pieces, including pleng kred sam chan (เพลงเกร็ดสามชั้น), pleng kred song chan (เพลงเกร็ดสองชั้น), and pleng kred chan diew (เพลงเกร็ดชั้นเดียว). Pleng kred song chang was most predominant.
2. Naphat (หน้าพาทย์): 15 musical pieces were found. In fact, ot (โอด) and tra non (ตระนอน) pieces were found being used to portray the characters' sorrow and act of sleeping, respectively. In addition, other pieces emerged, such as satukarn (สาธุการ), rua (รัว), choet (เชิด), and sen lao (เซ่นเหล้า).
3. Trimmed songs and modified songs: 48 songs were featured in lakhon rong. These were derived from Kred pieces and lakhon rong songs with melodies reduced to suit the length of the plays, along with kred musical pieces with melodies modified to enable a melodic variety, such as dialect songs.
4. Lakhon rong: There remained 614 of the songs. Their titles served as signs of time indication, and ethnicity or locations; some songs had been given specific names, such as those with names beginning with wan, with melodies originating from Western songs.

Additionally, a substantial number of dialect songs were discovered, such as Indian, Cambodian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Laotian, Burmese, Mon, Japanese, and Western. The Pramothai Troupe adapted these songs from those of the Pridalai Troupe and composed new lakhon rong songs for its own theatrical usage.

5. Bettalet: Featured were nine musical pieces. These were folk songs, for example, kiao khaw (เกี่ยวข้าว) and so mueang (ซอเมือง), along with sepa (เสภา) used to maintain narrative conciseness and pacing and he, such as hea klom (เห่กล่อม) and hea ruea (เห่เรือ) , to highlight the significant point of the narrative such as singing lullabies and traveling by waterway.

The list of the songs portrayed the distinctiveness of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe's creative and captivating lakhon rong titles. In fact, some capture the characters' emotions, while the others portray a certain point in time; they serve to represent the characters' ethnic backgrounds as well. Given the ethnic diversity among the characters, there exist a variety of dialects in lakhon rong songs of the troupe, which harmonize the narratives of the plays and different dialects.

Based on the synthesis, it can be concluded that there were four functions of lakhon rong songs performed: conservation, reduction, reconstruction, and recreation. Specifically, conservation entails adopting the traditional songs, such as pleng kred and lakhon rong songs of the Pridalai Troupe, while reduction refers to the practice of trimming and adapting the melodies of the traditional songs to fit the context of the Pridalai Troupe's lakhon rong. Additionally, reconstruction involves reworking and rearranging the existing melodies to produce new melodies, whereas creation can be described as the composition of new lakhon rong songs for the repertoire of the troupe's theatrical performances.

Incorporation of Lakorn Rong Songs of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe (Mae Bunnak Kanlayanamit)

The repertoire of 126 lakhon rong scripts of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe features a diverse array of genres, namely tragedies, melodramas, farces, romances, comedies, and modern dramas. The compositional styles of lakhon rong plays can be categorized into three groups as follows: 1) the transmutation of chronicles or historical records into lakhon rong plays; 2) the transmutation of foreign literature into the plays; and 3) the composition of the new plays. Based on those classifications, four plays were selected for further analysis: 1) Princess Milanda (1921), a play adapted from Arabic chronicles; 2) Nang Sao Chao Talat (1924), a literary work based on Taming of the Shrew by William Shakespeare; and two newly composed plays, namely 3) Thang Sawan (1926) and 4) Wira Burut (1929). These were chosen to analyze the elements of the plays, including plots, characters, languages, and the incorporation of lakhon rong songs into the plays, with the aim to uncover the approaches utilized by the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe to incorporate the songs. Based on the analysis and synthesis, the principles of incorporating lakhon rong songs can be summarized below:

1. Incorporating the songs based on the drama patterns entailed incorporating the songs into the plays according to the patterns of dance dramas; for example, Oh Lom Lom Nok (โอ้โลมนอก) was used for the act of courtship. At the same time, incorporation of naphat pieces adhered to the principle of meaningful expressions to accompany the characters' gestures and actions.

2. Incorporating the songs to link the narrative was intended for narrating the story with a chorus group as a vocalist and for the progression of the story with the characters as a vocalist.

3. Incorporating the songs based on the characters' emotions involved choosing the songs with significant contributions to express the characters' emotions to the audience. It is evident that an array of songs was available, each tailored to suit the characters' roles. However, people well-versed in selecting the repertoire of the songs may modify the melodies to capture a variety of emotions, thereby instilling the thought-provoking feeling.

4. Incorporating the songs based on the characters' ethnic backgrounds entailed incorporating dialect songs into the plays which resonate with their ethnicity. In addition, the accent of the particular ethnic group may be imitated.

5. Improving the songs to suit lakhon rong plays involved trimming, modifying the melodies, and refining vocal arrangements in sync with the length of the play. This can be classified into three groups: 1) songs with trimmed melodies, such as Tao Kin Phak Bung (trimmed) (เต่ากินผักบุ้งตัด), Farang Khuang (trimmed)(ฝรั่งควงตัด), Lao Siang Thian (trimmed) (ลาวเสี่ยงเทียนตัด), Srasom (trimmed)(สระสมตัด), and Kara Wake (trimmed) (การเวกตัด) ; 2) songs with modified melodies, for example, Ngew (modified)(เงี้ยวแปลง), Yuan (modified) (ญวนแปลง), Malayu (modified) มาลายูแปลง, Jean Keb Buppa (modified) (จีนเก็บบุปผาแปลง), Khaek (modified) (แขกแปลง), Khaek Malayu (modified) (แขกมลายูแปลง), and Huang Alai (modified) (ห่วงอาลัยแปลง); and 3) songs with refined melodies, such as Lao Krasae (new) (ลาวกระแซใหม่), Oi Ing (new) อ้อยอิ่งใหม่, Lao Lampang (new) ลาวลำปางใหม่, and Lao Pan (new) (ลาวแพนใหม่).

6. Incorporating the songs based on versification: The majority of lakhon rong plays featured the utilization of Thai octameter poems largely owing to the ease of incorporating lyrics into the plays and singing along Thai melodies. Nevertheless, different forms of versification necessitate selecting the songs and arranging the lyrics to be appropriate and harmonious. Specifically, maanawakkachan (มาณวกฉันท์)– a kind of Thai verse – is characterized by its lively rhythms, capturing the energy of young individuals. This versification was found in songs such as Sut Sawat and Tat Sawat, typically used for the act of courtship and interactions between male and female characters. Meanwhile, in literature, Intharawichianchan 11 (อินทรวิเชียรฉันท์ 11) is typically employed to capture objects of beauty, convey a sense of empathy as well as compassion, and occasionally to portray a feeling of sensitivity, sorrow, and indifference. It was used in these two songs, namely Soimas (สร้อยมาศ) and Dam Nern Samut (ดำเนินสมุทร), particularly in scenes where a male character describes his beloved woman. Witchumaalaachan (วิชชุมาลาฉันท์), on the other hand, is used in literature to depict a feeling of nervousness; this was employed in the song Hip No Tai (ฮิ๊บโน๊ต) to bemoan the parting of a beloved woman. Finally, Wasantadilokchan 14 (วสันตดิลกฉันท์ 14) is renowned for its beauty and often used to depict objects of exquisiteness; it was found being used in the song Ngew Malayu (งิ้วมาละยู). Additionally, other forms of versification, such as Khlong Si Suphap (โคลงสี่สุภาพ) and Kap Yani 11 (กาพย์ยานี 11) were employed in composing lakhon rong plays. Taking into account the composer's intentions, the selection of versification would match and be in line with the characters' emotions. In terms of music, versification influences the placement of lyrics or verses, singing, and sentiments of the songs which should resonate with the characters and the storyline of the plays.

Moreover, the study of the incorporation of songs in the plays reflected two dimensions of literary adaptations. The first was associated with the development of chronicles and foreign literary works into lakhon rong plays, which essentially are literary works for theatrical performances and subsequently are adapted for listening, while the other concerned the development of newly composed lakhon rong plays into literature for listening in the form of gramophone records. These are displayed in the following diagram (Figure 4).
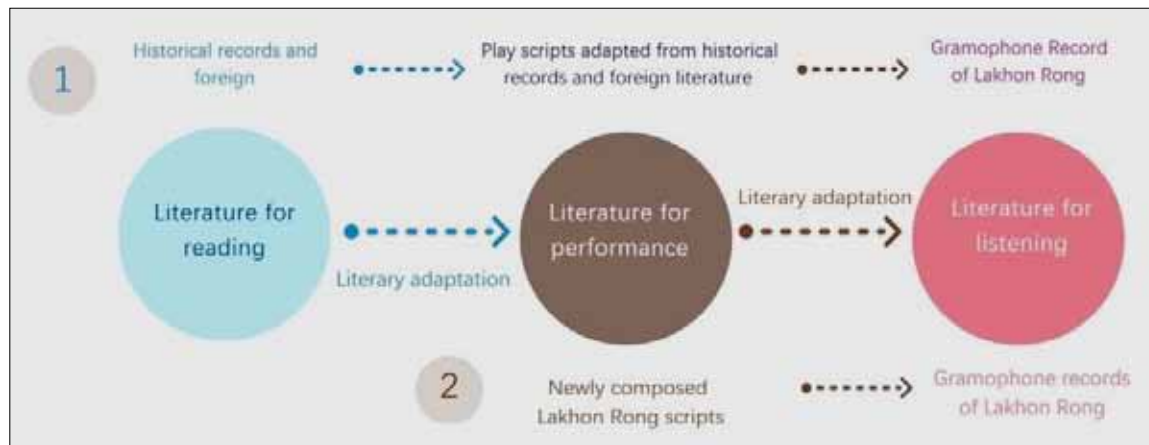

Figure 4. Diagram of the literary adaptation of lakhon rong plays of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troup during 1920-1935. Source: Researchers, 2024.

Musical Phenomenon and Adaptation of Lakhon Rong Songs of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe

The analysis of the data from gramophone records and lakhon rong songs from the plays of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe contributed to establishing the link of historical events throughout different periods, thereby providing a reflection of social and musical phenomena regarding its lakhon rong songs. It was discovered that what shaped the adjustment of the styles of the lakhon rong songs, including singing styles, musical arrangements, the melodic structure, rhythmic patterns and the formation of musical ensembles, were the Western influences and the social trends. The changes in the songs can be classified into three different periods below.

The Early Period

During this period, the Piphat Mai Nuam ensemble was used in accordance with performances in theaters, influenced by the Pridalai Troupe. In addition, the utilization of a Thai string ensemble with khim and organs was discovered only in the recording of gramophone records. The development of the so-called mixed string ensemble was derived from Kaew (Phrawat Khocharik), with Bunnak and others as vocalists and recording the gramophone records.

The method of singing still adhered to the practice of the traditional singing style, specifically singing Thai songs with lyrics and embellishments. The vocal usage involved using the throat as an articulator to project the voice, so the vocals were characterized as high-pitched and sharp tones. A variety of factors influencing the vocal usage for performing lakhon rong songs may be at play. Particularly, while melismatic phrasing was concerned with combining single melismas into phrases or sentences in sync with the melodies,

dialect songs relied on melismatic phrasing varied by the accent of the particular ethnic group in the play, such as the melismatic vocalization of 'ah aa aa aa' in a Chinese style. In the meantime, singing was performed with the modulation based on the rules of tonal conjugation, orthography, and dead and live syllables in compliance with the principle of linguistics. In fact, singing was clear, owing to the necessity of conveying the narrative through performances. Moreover, the unique attribute of singing was associated with the production of sounds to establish a link between lyrics, which may be attributed to techniques favored by each individual, particularly Bunnak. This method of singing is similar to singing lae (แหล่) pieces, referred to as 'assimilation' in Thai linguistics.

Simultaneously, lakhon rong songs during this period can be divided into two types, namely the songs adapted from Thai songs and newly composed songs based on the style of Thai songs. Na-tub (หน้าทับ) rhythms, a drum pattern for accompaniment, entailed using dialect-based drum patterns and reduced drum patterns to be in sync with lakhon rong songs. Both types of na-tub were characterized as simple, concise, and uncomplicated, thus facilitating the accompaniment of the Lakhon Rong performance.

The Adaptation Period

In this period, there was a change in the recording of gramophone records of lakhon rong songs, shifting from the utilization of Piphat Mai Nuam ensembles (ปี่พาทย์ไม้นวม) and Khrueangsai phasom ensembles (วงเครื่องสาย) to the incorporation of Western string ensembles for accompaniment. This transformation was attributed to the influence and the rising popularity of the Khrueangsai Luang ensembles (วงเครื่องสายหลวง) formed by the Fine Arts Department; as a result, the musicians of this ensemble helped perform and record the gramophone records for Bunnak's troupe. Additionally, the influence of military music with march and waltz rhythms contributed to the adaption of the Western vocal styles. The Thai singing style was still practiced during this period. Despite that, there was a marked difference in the vocal usage, compared to the early period. Specifically, a broader vocal range was employed. The melodic patterns influenced by Western marches led to the change in vocal techniques. Instead of a throat voice style used in the early period, the chest voice was employed. The singing style also entailed the use of semitones (a flat tone). Embellishments were influenced by the Western marches as well; simply speaking, they had been reduced but were still intertwined within the lyrics. With a reduction of embellishments, lyrics were incorporated, thereby rendering the songs similar to full-bodied Thai songs. Apart from that, singing would be adjusted to the melody of the song characterized as the Western melody with disjunct progression, unlike Thai songs in the early period with conjunct progression. As a consequence, singing became increasingly challenging due to the need for precise pitch control, yet this singing style enabled vocalists to showcase their talents and skills. Additionally, the rhythmic pattern of lakhon rong songs during this period was a quick waltz, an accompaniment for dance, influenced by the growing popularity of dance events. Both waltz and march were inspired by military music. Furthermore, Western melodies were adapted for lakhon rong songs.

The Progressive Period

This marked the final period of the Nakhon Bantoeng Group, which depicts a significant transformation towards the embrace of internationalization through the change in the musical ensemble. That is, they made a shift to jazz with incorporation of Western musical instruments, including piano, violin, saxophone, and trumpet. Piano chords served as a bass

accompaniment, with chord progression as a rhythmic guide of the song for the members of the band, harmonizing and complementing their interplay and singing. The practice of the Western singing style, incorporation of Thai embellishment elements, and articulation during vocal performances resulted in a more melodious performance, compared to the previous periods. Melodies and vocal modulation entailed using embellishments to bridge the notes, while vocal modulation was based on Thai orthography. The singing style featured organum, a two-voice polyphonic technique. There was an increasing variety of the use of rhythms such as foxtrot, while the melodies of musical instruments were harmoniously arranged, contributing to greater intricacy and complexity of the music. Furthermore, the singing style was designed to allow for harmony between two vocalists at certain parts, which can be simply described as a two-voice polyphonic style. The Western melodies were also adapted for dialect songs in lakhon rong.

With the analysis and synthesis of the data throughout different periods, it can be stated that lakhon rong of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe portrayed a significant link between Thai and Western music, essentially representing an area of interaction influenced by the adaptation and changes in accordance with the social trend. Such a transformation contributed to the emergence of lakhon rong, a product of the entertainment business, which evolved into a model for modern Thai songs emerging in the subsequent period. Among many examples was the emergence of the song titled Sangkeet Sampan (สังคีตสัมพันธ์) of the Public Relations Department which adapted Thai classical music to the Western musical ensembles, with Aue Sunthornsanan as a prominent figure bringing this musical phenomenon to life. From a different perspective, modern Thai songs are a product of musical evolution which has been derived from lakhon rong songs; figuratively speaking, lakhon rong songs served as a station contributing to the transformation from traditional Thai songs to modern Thai songs. The following diagram (Figure 5) provides an overview of the adaptation of lakhon rong songs of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe.
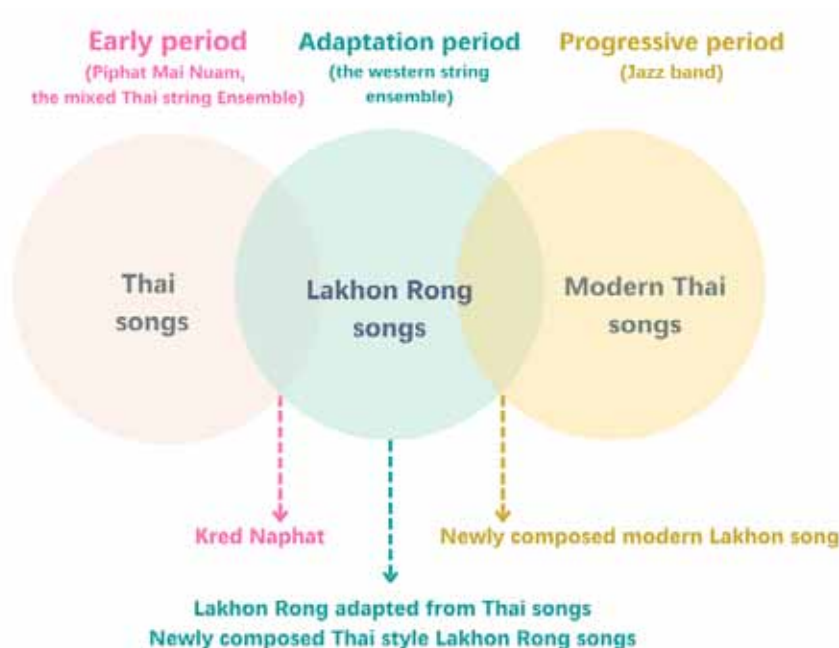

Figure 5. Musical Phenomenon and Adaptation of Lakhon Rong Songs of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe. Source: Researchers, 2024.

Conclusion

The present study investigated lakhon rong songs of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe through the play scripts and gramophone records with links to historical events. The results reflected the musical phenomena of the past transforming through the evolution of lakhon rong performances. This has contributed to providing a comprehensive body of musical knowledge of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe, which portrays the endeavors of Bunnak Kanlayanamit. In respect of music, she improved the songs and composed new lakhon rong songs for theatrical performances while improving vocal techniques, leading to a more modern style of singing. As a result, there were changes in the musical ensemble to accompany the theatrical performances. Regarding literature, the results depicted the transmutation of literary works for reading into those for performance. The other significant approach involved composing a substantial number of new lakhon rong songs for theatrical usage as well as the development of literature for listening in the form of gramophone records. It can be summarized that Bunnak Kanlayanamit, the owner of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe, improved lakhon rong songs, transmuted literary works, adjusted the musical ensemble, and most importantly creating the lakhon rong scripts, the songs, and the musical ensemble for her troupe's theatrical performance. This serves as a crucial milestone and evidence which underscores the transformations for survival and provision of entertainment to fulfill the needs of the audience. This marks a significant period of time which reflects the phenomenon of Thai entertainment culture while serving as crucial information for exploration of the history of music.

Discussion

The findings from this study underscore the interplay between cultural adaptation and the evolution of lakhon rong within the socio-political and cultural dynamics of early 20th century Siam. Reflecting on the literature review and theoretical frameworks highlighted by Sanders (2006) and Hutcheon (2006), the adaptations observed in the lakhon rong performances by the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe can be understood as both reflective and constitutive of broader societal transformations. Firstly, the adaptation of Western musical elements into lakhon rong underlines a strategic cultural negotiation process, where Western influence was neither wholly adopted nor completely resisted. This aligns with Sanders' notion of adaptation as a dynamic and reciprocal engagement with cultural texts and forms. The selective incorporation of Western elements into traditional Thai musical theater did not merely result in a hybrid form of entertainment but also functioned as a cultural statement of Siam's modern identity, navigating the pressures of Western colonial presence without direct colonization. Comparable patterns of selective incorporation can be seen in Japanese shingeki (new theater) during the Meiji period and Chinese Huaju (spoken drama) in the early 20th century, both of which synthesized indigenous forms with Western dramaturgy as part of national modernizing projects. Similarly, in colonial India, Parsi theater adapted Shakespearean and European operatic conventions to vernacular narratives, facilitating a popular yet nationally inflected genre. Moreover, the evolution of lakhon rong as documented through the play scripts and gramophone records of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe exemplifies Hutcheon's (2006) idea of adaptation as an integration of the familiar and the new, allowing a cultural form to maintain its relevance within changing social realities. This is evident in how the adaptations performed by the troupe were not just artistic decisions but were also embedded within the larger context of Siam's nationalistic responses to globalization and Western modernization. These adaptations were part of broader efforts to forge a modern national identity that was distinctly Thai, yet open to global influences (Laochockchaikul, 2023).

The synthesis of the historic recordings and play scripts further illustrates the dual function of cultural preservation and innovation. This duality is critical in understanding the role of adaptation in post-colonial contexts, as discussed by Bhabha (2015) and Hall (1993), who highlight how cultural identity is continually negotiated and redefined through such processes. Although Thailand was never colonized, the strategies employed by the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe reflect similar cultural resilience and adaptive tactics seen in post-colonial societies, suggesting that the theoretical post-colonial framework is applicable for analyzing cultural phenomena in Siam. The integration of lakhon rong into the fabric of Thai cultural expression through adaptations that responded to both internal desires for cultural continuity and external pressures for modernization underscores the complex nature of cultural adaptation. This phenomenon echoes broader transnational trends in musical theatre, such as the adaptation of operetta forms in early 20th-century Hungary and Austria, where local folklore and national themes were embedded within Western musical frameworks. In the Philippines, the sarswela—a musical play heavily influenced by Spanish zarzuela—similarly functioned as a vehicle for expressing nationalist sentiment while drawing from foreign operatic structures. These examples suggest that hybrid theatrical forms like lakhon rong were part of a global movement of vernacular modernization through performance.

In addition to the existing theoretical framing, the concepts of auto-colonization and crypto-colonization offer valuable lenses through which to understand Siam's cultural transformations. As Tsianos and Papadopoulos (2006) and Alexander Etkind (2011) suggest, these frameworks highlight how non-colonized or semi-colonized nations may internalize imperial structures and aesthetics in the pursuit of modernity. In the Thai context, the selective incorporation of Western operatic and theatrical elements into lakhon rong may be viewed not only as cultural adaptation, but also as an act of auto-colonial mimicry—reinforcing external standards of civility while preserving sovereign autonomy. Furthermore, regional theatrical forms such as bangsawan in the Malay world offer a compelling Southeast Asian parallel. Emerging during the height of colonial presence, bangsawan exemplified a strategic use of popular theatre for cultural diplomacy, identity assertion, and resilience in the face of imperial influence (Lindsay, 2016). Like lakhon rong, it blended local traditions with Western operatic elements, serving both as entertainment and a subtle form of cultural negotiation. The case of the Nakhon Bantoeng Troupe not only provides a vivid illustration of these processes but also highlights the role of artistic creativity in negotiating cultural integrity and openness in the face of global influences. This study not only contributes to our understanding of Thai musical theater but also enriches the broader discourse on cultural adaptation and resilience, offering insights into the ways societies navigate their cultural identities amid global dynamics.

Interestingly, the popularity of lakhon rong was initially driven by its acceptance by the elite, especially Prince Narathip and King Chulalongkorn (Tungtang, 2011). This phenomenon can be understood through the lens of fashion leader theories, which suggest that a small group of influential figures can significantly impact cultural trends. In the context of Siam, the royal and aristocratic classes historically played a pivotal role in setting cultural standards, their preferences often cascading through society as desirable norms (Chung, 2003; Motion, 2020). The elite's endorsement of lakhon rong, therefore, not only elevated the art form's status but also facilitated its diffusion across different societal layers, embodying the trickle-down theory where trends start at the upper echelons of society and gradually permeate the lower strata (McCracken 1985; Jardim 2020). Similar elite-driven

dissemination of musical innovation can be seen in the French court's patronage of Baroque opera under Louis XIV or the Qing dynasty's support for Kunqu opera, both of which used courtly taste as a means to standardize and disseminate artistic forms across class boundaries. The royal backing of lakhon rong illustrates the interconnectedness of cultural innovation and elite influence in traditional societies. As these cultural trends became more accessible and widespread, they evolved, losing some of their exclusivity but gaining a foundational place in cultural tradition (Caulkins et al., 2007). This pattern reflects the modern dynamics of trend dissemination, increasingly mediated by mass communication tools that accelerate the spread and transformation of cultural trends (Atik et al. 2022; Rocamora 2013). In the case of lakhon rong, the royal patronage not only affirmed its cultural value but also acted as a mechanism for cultural diplomacy and identity construction, projecting a modern yet distinctly Thai identity in a period of significant national transformation. This alignment with elite preferences underscores the significant role of societal leaders in shaping and steering cultural trends and highlights the multifaceted nature of adaptation as both a response to and a driver of broader socio-political changes.

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Factors Affecting the Knowledge

of Women on Traditional Hand-Woven Fabric Products in Hongsa District, Xayabouly Province, Laos

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the knowledge of traditional hand-woven products and the factors influencing this knowledge among 184 farmers in Hongsa District, Sayabouly Province, Laos. Data were collected through questionnaires and knowledge tests and analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The results showed that over 62.5% of the participants—most of whom were women—had a moderate level of knowledge about traditional hand-woven products. Several factors had a statistically significant positive relationship with knowledge ($p < 0.05$), including income earned from weaving, frequency of contact with neighbors, education level, and time spent on weaving activities. Conversely, age was found to have a significant negative effect on knowledge levels. These findings suggest that younger, better-educated individuals who are more socially connected and spend more time weaving tend to have higher levels of knowledge. Therefore, interventions aiming to sustain and conserve traditional hand-weaving practices should focus on strengthening knowledge-sharing among community members, improving access to education, and offering targeted training programs. Such efforts could enhance local income opportunities and support the long-term preservation of traditional cultural practices.

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Introduction

Hand-woven is a valuable cultural heritage and the woven fabrics used as clothing still have a unique identity that can be found everywhere in Lao PDR. The production of woven fabrics is considered a steaming occupation that can generate income for villagers in many communities especially the group of women farmers. Woven cloth is a symbolic medium of people in each community. However, for all Lao women, there must be Chin cloth to wear because when they go to work, go to school, or attend traditional events, and rituals Lao women must wear Chin cloth as a rule that must be adhered to in all government offices, the hand-woven cloth is therefore tied and connected with religious ceremonies, and is one of the ways of life of the Lao people until now.

Hand-woven fabrics are One district one product (ODOP) of Laos, which has handicrafts representing 56% (136 units, 616 products) Ministry of Industry and Commerce (2020); Xayabouly province has woven fabric products which are important products of ODOP products in the province because there is a licensed product mark one city, one national product, a total of 13 units, there are 49 products, products of 13 villages, 6 towns in the whole province, which has handicraft products, which is a woven fabric product 30% Xayabouly province of Industry and Commerce (2020).

Figure 1. Top, products of local weaving fabrics in Hongsa District, Xayabouly Province, Laos. Below, Natural fabric dyeing methods. Source: Photographs by Ms. Kitsana Chanthakoun, February 15, 2020.

Hongsa has been known as a city with a distinctive culture of elephants and textiles for a long time, woven fabrics of Hongsa are exported both domestically and internationally, whether it's Japan, Thailand, Vientiane Capital, Luang Prabang, etc. The name is licensed of product, mark one city, one product, national, a total of 2 units, there are 18 products Office of Industry and Commerce Hongsa District (2020); But in terms of sales, they are still sold in a narrow range or only in groups of old customers who buy for themselves, consign, sell, and those who buy to resell, in a state where costs and expenses operate more the price of the fabric is still unable to set a high price. The growth of fabrics that are processed into products in various forms has become more popular and sold through more online platforms, causing some weavers to become hired weavers instead of Inventing, transmitting, and developing local wisdom.

Therefore, to make the production of woven fabrics by women farmers group beautiful and maintain unique and good quality, therefore it is very necessary to study the level of knowledge, and factors related to the knowledge level of women farmers to make the weaving career another profession that generates income that is consistently engaged, the most important thing that women must have knowledge and ability to transform into products in various forms that can be exported and are in demand in the domestic market.

Research Methods
Population and Sample
The population used in this study was women female farmers who produce traditional weaving fabrics and live in Hongsa district, Xayabouly province, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR.) The sampling was divided into 2 steps, details as follows.

Step 1. Calculated the sample size. Using a calculation method from the formula (Taro Yamane, 1973) at a confidential level of 95% and a deviation of 0.05 was set to determine the size of the sample of women from Vieng Keo village. and Na Kaen Kham Village, a total of 340 people Hongsa District Industry and Commerce Office (2019)

Step 2. Calculated the sample from women in Hongsa District, which included 2 villages: Ban Vieng Keo and Ban Na Kaen Kham. A total of 184 samples were obtained randomly from the total number of women in 2 villages, using simple random sampling (Sample Random Sampling) by drawing lots. Because the population in each village was not equal. Therefore, it was necessary to find the proportion of the sample size. The sample size was proportional to the total population according to the equation Kanlaya Wanitchbuncha (2005).

Tools and Data Collection
This research study used a questionnaire and a knowledge test as a tool for collecting data from 184 women farmers in Hongsa district, Xayabouly Province, Lao PDR, in 2020. The data collection details were divided into 2 parts: chapter 1 information about personal basic characteristics, economics, and society of farmers, and Chapter 2 Knowledge of traditional weaving and fabric production of women farmers with a total of 20 questions, where the knowledge test has Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was a quantitative analysis by using a software program for social science research to help analyse which are as follows:

1. Data on basic personal characteristics, economy, society, and knowledge about local weaving fabrics were used in descriptive statistics to analyse the data, namely percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

2. In analysing the level of knowledge about traditional weaving fabrics of women farmers, women farmers were required to specify the answer to each question with 2 options, i.e. Correct, representing the code in the analysis as 1 and Incorrect, by representing the code in the analysis is 0, then collecting knowledge scores of individual farmers. To categorize farmers according to the score range and level of knowledge about food security at the household level as follows:

     Score range knowledge level
     15-20   means knowledge at a high level
      8-14   mean knowledge at the moderate level
       0-7   means a low level of knowledge

3. An analysis of factors affecting the knowledge of female farmers' traditional weaving fabric production. Statistical analysis using Multiple Regression Analysis (Enter type) Kanlaya (2005), which was a statistical analysis to find the relationship between at least 2 independent variables and 1 dependent variable Waro (2010) that the variables Which independent variable was significantly related to the dependent variable at the 0.05 level and how much was the degree of correlation. In this analysis, there were 16 independent variables as follows: Age, status, education level, ethnicity, number of household members, labour used in weaving, main occupation, total household income, revenue from the production of woven fabrics time spent on weaving fabrics, sources of capital, amount of capital spent on weaving, the social position being a member of a village group, experience in weaving, having contact with neighbors for weaving, work obtaining information from various media about weaving which from the study of the relationship between each pair of independent variables. By using the Pearson Correlation analysis method (Pearson Correlation), it was found that none of the independent variables had a correlation (r) greater than 0.80 that would cause a high correlation between the independent variables. (Multicollinearity), which violates the preconditions of multiple regression analysis Suchart (1993).

Results and Discussion
Basic Personal, Social-Economic Characteristics of Women Farmers in Hongsa District, Xaybouly Province, Lao PDR

The results showed that most sample women farmers were aged between 26-30 years old, representing 35.3%, with an average age of 44 years. They were married. 96.7 percent completed primary school education. or below the elementary school. Most of the farmers were Lue ethnic group, accounting for 72.3 percent. The main occupation was weaving estimated at 52.2 percent. There were 4.41 members of the average household. The average household

labour is 1 person with an average income of 262,412 baht per year. It takes 4-6 hours to produce traditional weaving. 72.3 percent of female farmers used their capital in weaving, 54.3 percent had an average of 15.85 years of experience in weaving, did not have a community or social leadership position 97.3 percent, had joined the group in the community was 51.6 percent. The sample female farmers didn't have contact with agricultural officials. Or didn't attend the training or study visits and have contact weaving work with neighbors an average of 8.99 times per month.

The Farmers' Knowledge of Food Security at the Household Level
The results found that the local woven fabric production of women farmers' knowledge at the middle level at 2.5, the higher level of knowledge at 28.3, and the level of knowledge about local woven fabric production was less at 9.2%, the details are shown below.

The level of knowledge about local woven fabric production of women farmers	no	%
High	52	28.3
Middle	115	62.5
Less	17	9.2
$\bar{x}$ = 12.16 Min-Max = 5–17 SD = 3.06140		

Figure 2. Table showoing the level of knowledge about local woven fabric production of women farmers in Hongsa District, Sayabouly province, Laos.

Factors Affecting the Knowledge of the Production of Traditional Women Farmers' Woven Fabrics of Women Farmers in Hongsa District, Sayabouly Province, Laos.

Factor analysis correlated with the level of knowledge of the production of traditional woven fabrics of women farmers in Hongsa district, Xayaboury province, Lao People's Democratic Republic, found that all 16 independent variables influenced the value of disparities that can be explained to the independent variables as the production of traditional woven fabrics was 88.3% (R^2 = .883). When considering the independent variables that correlated statistically significantly with the level of knowledge of the production of traditional woven fabrics of women farmers, positive correlations were found with 5 variables as incomes in addition to the production of traditional fabrics, incomes from the production of traditional fabrics according to the design, traditional methodology (Figere1, and Figure 2) by getting in touch with a neighbor in weaving work, the level of knowledge and time spent on the production of woven fabrics, and the negative correlation as age (table 2.). the results of the analysis can be review as follows:

1. Women farmers whose having higher incomes in addition to the production of traditional fabrics resulted in greater knowledge of the production of woven fabrics having a high income of farmers would have a cost to gain knowledge or an opportunity to access information on the production of woven fabrics, especially knowledge for dyeing fabric, new fabric pattern design if having more income for acquiring new technology for information as television, the smartphone with the Internet access and applications for searching information.

2. The level of knowledge, can be explained that women farmers with higher education were found that a higher average knowledge of the production of woven fabrics. It could be, that women farmers with a higher level of education had more opportunities to learn or more opportunities to access more information on the production of woven fabrics, and if farmers had high education, were brought new knowledge and techniques from other sources to adapt or adjust to the production and earning more income Supitcha Chotikhamjorn (2021).

3. The incomes from the production of traditional fabrics were explained that women farmers with more incomes from the production of traditional fabrics were found farmers having more knowledge of the production of woven fabrics; women farmers whose having more income from weaving works indicated that the more experience and knowledge, earning more income from the production of woven fabrics resulting to a higher point of knowledge having high knowledge were be designed new fabric patterns causing the higher price of woven fabrics, cost-effective for production, supporting market and income from the sale of fabrics can support the family, giving a household a year-round income Wanpiranya intho et al (2019).

4. Time spent on woven fabric production can explain to women farmers who have more time spent producing woven fabrics will increase their knowledge of traditional woven fabric production, this may be due to the increased time spent on woven fabric production, which makes women farmers focus more on woven fabric production and more on the research of new knowledge and techniques, as well as giving more experience in weaving, and accumulating more knowledge, resulting in more knowledge related to the production of woven fabrics.

5. The contact with neighbors for weaving work can explain to women farmers who have contacts with their neighbors in weaving effect to increase the knowledge of weaving fabric production. This may be due to contacting weaving with neighbors, allowing farmers to always exchange new knowledge to talk, contact a house in the field of weaving, and allowing to accumulate knowledge and techniques, which is up-to-date in the modern era were affected to greater access to knowledge related to weaving. It is consistent with the study of Narubet Leklang (2015) found that the approaches for developing knowledge of women farmers who weave cotton group members should be encourage to there is an exchange of learning about work to be able to work in every step to increase the skills of new knowledge, ideas, and experiences with knowledgeable people.

6. Age can be described as the Age of women farmers increased affected the knowledge of local weaving fabrics were decrease, this may be due to the increased age, allowing farmers to have more burdens, such as the burden of raising children, taking care of social burdens, so there is no time to study and search for new knowledge, it was affecting the limitations of the time that may result in access to knowledge related to knowledge is not as high as it should be this study is similar with Sutheemon Chongesiriroj (2016), which differs in demographic characteristics in terms of age and type of products, there were different mean opinions on factors affecting knowledge management in knowledge management of local wisdom: A Case Study of Don Luang Village, Mae Rang Subdistrict, Pa Sang District, Lamphun Province.

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable		
	Knowledge of local woven fabric production by women farmers		
	B	t	Sig.
1. Age	-.038	-2.626	.009**
2. Marital status	.184	.280	.780
3. Education	.632	.086	.020*
4. Ethnicity	.174	.606	.545
5. Occupation	-.385	1.433	.154
6. Income other than the production of woven fabrics	9.666E-5	7.248	.000**
7. Income from the production of woven fabrics	3.919E-6	3.874	.000**
8. The time it takes to produce woven fabrics	.298	3.857	.014*
9. Funding source	-.146	2.487	.140
10. Funding used for woven fabrics	-6.613E-5	-1.482	.314
11. Social position	.926	-1.010	.201
12. weaving experience	.037	1.285	.122
13. obtaining information from various media about weaving	.023	1.555	.654
14. Having contact with neighbors about weaving	.227	.449	.002**
15. Being a member of a village group	.293	3.113	.441
16. Other additional factors obtained from weaving	.590	.772	.228
Constant	5.667	6.581	.000**
R^2 = .877[a] (87.7%) F= 40.262 Sig. F =0.000**			

Figure 3. Table of the factors affecting knowledge of local woven fabric production of female farmers in Hongsa District, Sayabouly province, Laos. Remarks: * There was a significant relationship at the level 0.05 ** There was a significant relationship at the level 0.01

Conclusion

In this study was concluded that more than half of female farmers had a moderate level of knowledge about folk weaving fabric production and it was higher significantly (positive correlation) of 5 variables, namely income other than the production of woven fabrics Income from the production of woven fabrics having contact with neighbors about weaving education level (negative correlation) of 1 variable namely age.

Recommendations

1. The Office of Industry and Trade should work closely with the office of the Women's Federation of Hongsa District, Sayabouly Province, Laos. Must be promoting training to improve more techniques and use appropriate technology for the women farmers on processes and markets. If farmers have the knowledge, information, wisdom, and Inheritance of Hand-Woven Fabric to increase the income of their families.

2. The office of the Women's Federation of Hongsa District, Sayabouly province, Laos. should organize training programs to provide knowledge about fabric processing for woven fabrics focusing on women farmers who do weaving so they can apply the knowledge to process their woven fabric products to increase their income.

3. Government agencies should have advertisements to educate about the conservation of woven fabric production in schools or educational institutions so the new generation to recognize and understand the importance of preserving the production of local weaving fabrics to preserve this good culture to last forever.

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Towards a Sustainable Play-Ground: Performance Ecosystems

for a Livable Bangkok Neighborhood[1]

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Abstract

This article examines an effort to turn urban research into creative placemaking by using performances to make a livable Bangkok neighborhood more vibrant. Research explored diverse stakeholders of Samyan-Banthat Thong in central Bangkok during COVID-19. This exploration found opportunities to link the neighborhood's entrepreneurs, students, visitors and property managers, and discovered key characteristics of the complex and changing neighborhood. We used this knowledge to design a small festival bringing performing artists into the area's main park and to important sites surrounding it for a weekend of live performances, workshops and demonstrations. By using performance to attract diverse publics to the neighborhood, the festival marked a re-opening of the neighborhood and was a gateway to post-pandemic participatory cultural life. The results enhanced the livelihood of a complex Bangkok neighborhood, showing the viability of this work. It also developed flexible tools for use in other urban spaces, and nurtured cultural entrepreneurs able to use this community-centered performing arts approach to enhance other Thai urban settings.

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Introduction

Live performances can help to enhance the value and vitality of a city. Organizing, supporting, and celebrating live cultural offerings through local events and festivals can invigorate urban communities. This idea has been tied to a spectrum of views on how to assess the value and vitality of urban artistic and cultural activity. On one end, urban spaces are seen as empty areas that can be filled with commodifiable activities and sites, including heritage spaces and cultural practices, which can provide sources of revenue through tourism, along with other forms of consumption. This view sees the value of urban areas as so many *"experiencescapes"* that can be filled with various cultural commodities (O'Dell & Billing, 2005). These commodities can be tied to city branding, tourism, urban regeneration, and effective marketing. At the other end of the spectrum, urban spaces are seen as sites for creatively negotiating forms of value that emerge from designing new ways to imagine and produce attempts to order, sanitize, or market city spaces. This *relational view* is based on values tied to spatially productive processes in particular locations. This latter view sees open-ended urban spaces working by their "throwntogetherness," meaning that there is "the chance of space [which] may set us down next to the unexpected neighbour" (Massey, 2005:149). The latter relational view of spatial value shows how urban spaces are parts of ongoing processes of cultural circulation, configuration, and reconfiguration. Here, urban space is less an empty location waiting to be filled with culture, and more of a productive, active site where culture is already happening, encouraging cultural ineraction and enhancement. In this relational view, the performing arts may add to processes of cultural placemaking through lively forms of "community engagement."[2] An urban festival with live performances may enhance urban value and vitality, as it is an agent of urban identity formation and community encounters, and as a force that draws visitors and generates income.

Live performance events can help to enhance the productive potential of an urban space in multiple ways. Performance activities in cities work in complex ways and involve aspects of both income generation and cultural participation. Jen Harvie's 2009 book *Theatre & the City* looks beyond cultural materialist analyses. She sees urban performances as more than just money-makers or attracting visitors, and not merely in a performative relation to creating spaces of hope by urban performances that free opportunities for social and political agency. Beyond this apparent dichotomy, she avoids either a pessimistic neoliberal interpretation or a purely utopian liberatory interpretation of the place of performances in cities.

This article uses a relational approach to examine a Bangkok urban cultural space in relation to creative placemaking project that made a small festival near the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. This experimental festival in central Bangkok helped to plant the seeds of urban cultural placemaking, by embedding performance events into a changing urban neighborhood. It draws on grounded research, which sought to consider how the performing arts could help the Samyan-Banthat Thong neighborhood around Chulalongkorn University become a new cultural area and how local visitors and businesses and to add to its cultural value via community engagement.

The research first sought to identify key features of the Samyan-Banthat Thong community, located between Rama I Road and Rama IV Road in central Bangkok, and then to explore how the performing arts could help to enliven the area as a new urban tourist spot.

The process identified and developed a network of stakeholders in this space, ranging from those in government to those in university to those in the private sector who are committed to developing the area into a sustainable and creative neighborhood and performing artists. Research also aimed to investigate the area's visitors, customers and stakeholders to learn how live performances could help to enhance engagement in the area for the future. The research project had three main results. First, it made a small performing arts festival as *an example of creative place-making* grounded in and enlivening Samyan-Banthat Thong that served as its gateway into a post-COVID "new normal" world where live public performances mattered to its thriving. It secondly generated *a toolbox for creative place-making* that could be used in other parts of Thailand. Thirdly, *it nurtured a group of talented place-makers* who were able to design locally-grounded and locally-relevant performance festivals in other places.

A Framework for Designing Urban Performance Festivals as Cultural Placemaking

Performance festivals can help enhance city life by turning urban spaces into cultural places. While urban festivals are often framed as part of contemporary market-based principles shaping urban identities and places, culturally productive aspects of performance-centered festivals are also key parts of creative placemaking processes.[3] This view builds on Henri Lefebvre (1974 [1991]) who sees space as socially produced. Doreen Massey further notes how space is a "product of interrelations… constituted through interactions" (Massey, 2005:9). As part of a dynamic social process, space is always "in-the-making," as an ongoing development being generated through interactions that are never finished and never closed. In this view, a city is always *becoming* "through circulation, combination and recombination of people and things" (Crang, 2001:190). The circulations, combinations and remixes co-produce space as a place, showing that "identities/entities, the relations 'between' them, and the spatiality which is part of them, are all co-constitutive" (Massey, 2005:10). Identities are integral to that space, both rising within and shaping the space as a *place* that people care about. Still, space is often contested and open to negotiation, marked by an active diversity of conduct. In short, far from being an empty and neutral frame filled with people, things and events, space forms a dynamic performative force that contributes to producing people, things, events and identities, as well as meanings and values, and to generating creative places that people come to care about. Performance festivals can help to enhance the forces of urban space and to shape the identities tied to that *space-becoming-place* as one way to do "creative placemaking."

Highlighting some distinctive features of recent urban festivals as potential solutions to city problems, Davies (2015:533) noted that "[m]any contemporary attempts to resolve the problems of the modernist city has been the relatively limited attention paid by most urban scholars to features of the city that relate to sensory not material attributes, to consumption not production, pleasure not work, and to episodic rather than permanent characteristics. Festive events in cities combine these four traits. These are activities consciously planned to last a limited time to mark special occasions, or to promote specific events, often using spectacles and parades designed to create excitement and joy, as well as achieving cultural, social and economic goals." What is more, Chalcraft and Magaudda (2011:174) remarks how "festivals can be seen and analysed as terrains where different cultural, aesthetic and political patterns and values temporarily converge and clash, constantly creating, stabilizing and redefining the setting of festival interaction." This metaphor of

a festival as a vital contact zone sees festival spaces as marked by negotiations between converging and diverging interests and values; it draws attention to the nondeterministic and dynamic quality of festivals, and able to create nuanced and enduring meanings. In a Thai context, an urban festival resonates with the energy local placemaking force of a traditional "ngan wat" (Buddhist temple fair) that are still commonplace in rural Thailand.

Urban festivals can create distinctive and innovative ways for connecting urban spaces to cultural activities and performance events as part of placemaking processes. Based on negotiations between converging and diverging interests and values of participants underscores how festivals are open-ended and dynamic processes. The focused cultural intensity and spontaneous "throwntogetherness" offered by festivals in urban spaces enables heightened aesthetic and emotional experiences which are fundamentally multi-sensory, depending on diverse ways of engaging the body, including "the impact rhythm has on the flesh" (Duffy, et al., 2011:17). By helping to produce new types of bodily sensation, movement and emotion with other bodies engaged in similar things, the festival space can contribute to making the participatory process and site extraordinary. Urban festival spaces can also provide new types of identity construction and play which is based on more participatory experience that differs from walking through a mall, going to a large mainstream event, by becoming a site for constructing and performing social identities and differences. As a site for potential new forms of participation and inclusion – in its design and openness to diversity – a festival enables new active modes of participation and cultural consumption and the creation of sensory and embodied value. Urban festivals can thus help to produce new forms of value and new places based on a relational view of space that reworks standard experiences and identities.

This article will show how field research discovered the urban structure of a Bangkok neighborhood that became the basis of a small performance festival held after the worst of the COVID pandemic. Performances in urban neighborhoods are a kind of city activity that may be differentiated. At least four types of urban aesthetic activity can be tied to performances: a) a performance festival as a flagship event; b) performance spaces related to urban monuments like theatres; c) performances as locations of subversive art; and d) performances as sites of education and therapy media (Yavo-Ayalon, Alon-Mozes & Aharon-Gutman, 2020). The small Bangkok festival discussed here has features of type a) and b) – a flagship cultural event and also a type of living urban focal point, forming a site to underscore involvement in lively cultural activities, and as a site for embody and engaging forms of post-pandemic cultural capital.

The research that led to a small experimental festival for Samyan-Banthat Thong in 2022 led to a type of flagship event which highlights vitality and creativity of its practices (Florida, 2005). It aims to create an attractive urban image for the neighborhood as a living and creative location (Quinn & Wilks, 2017). The festival was designed around a spatial arrangement and adaptation of central city space, and this contributed to the marketing and branding of the neighborhood and its unique features. The concentration of festival activities in time and space also contributes to shaping local cultural identities and communal values. The social perspective emphasizes that in festival times and places, city spaces are reshaped in a manner that privileges festival audiences and contains them within parts of the city that are appropriated for cultural consumption and at the same time excludes and

marginalizes local residents (Jamieson 2004; Willems-Braun 1994).

This article links an experimental post-pandemic urban performance festival to an embedding of performance activities into an urban neighborhood space over a two-day period. Designing a performance festival in a neighborhood of sites and activities helps to visualize situated performances in a concrete way. The relation of urban space and the performance festival are examined based on various spatial types found in the city neighborhood: *enclosure, centrality, axiality, and permeability.*[4] The performance activities of a given festival depend on the urban physical and social structure and are tied to their immediate urban surroundings. The festival considered here used aspects of all four types of this socio-spatiality as visualized below.
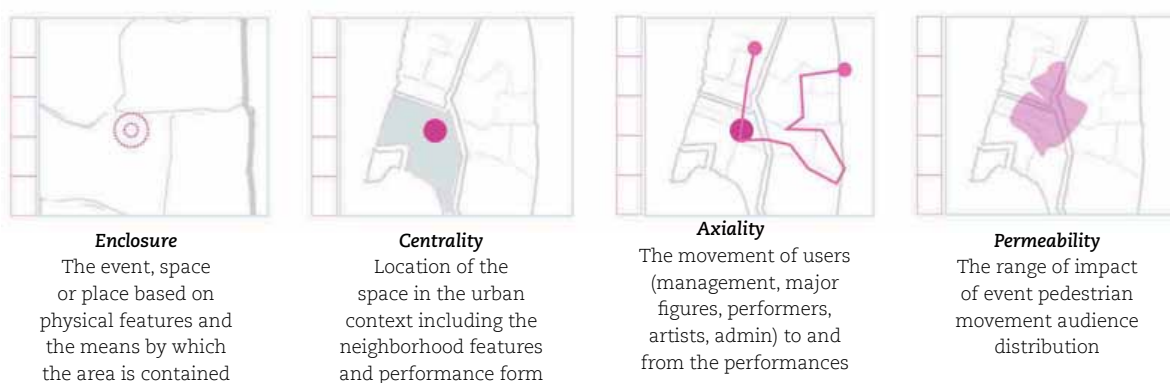

Enclosure
The event, space
or place based on
physical features and
the means by which
the area is contained

Centrality
Location of the
space in the urban
context including the
neighborhood features
and performance form

Axiality
The movement of users
(management, major
figures, performers,
artists, admin) to and
from the performances

Permeability
The range of impact
of event pedestrian
movement audience
distribution

Figure 1. Spatial-social categories for analysis (from Yavo-Ayalon, Alon-Mozes & Aharon-Gutman, 2020).

Case Study: The Experimental Performance Festival in Samyan-Banthat Thong

The Samyan-Banthat Thong neighborhood includes several socio-spatial areas that can be identified through the distinct modes of *enclosure, centrality, axiality,* and *permeability* which were used in the design of the performance activities for an experimental community-centered festival.[5] These modes point to how people kept in, repeated, passed through, or contest structures of this urban neighborhood during the festival. We wanted to use performance activities to expand beyond the enclosed boundaries of the performance spaces or events and to expand their socio-spatial impact to the larger urban structures. The design of the festival drew on these diverse ways of engaging performances in this neighborhood by involving both local stakeholders and outside visitors in this process. This helped to promote urban vitality and the post-pandemic lively image of the changed neighborhood. We saw the effects in the results of ur experimental festival, which helped to connect relationships between performance activities and the surrounding urban space. We found that the various neighborhood's performance activities had positive effects and few negative effects on the immediate urban surroundings of the neighborhood. We also discovered how performance activities relate to other urban spaces.
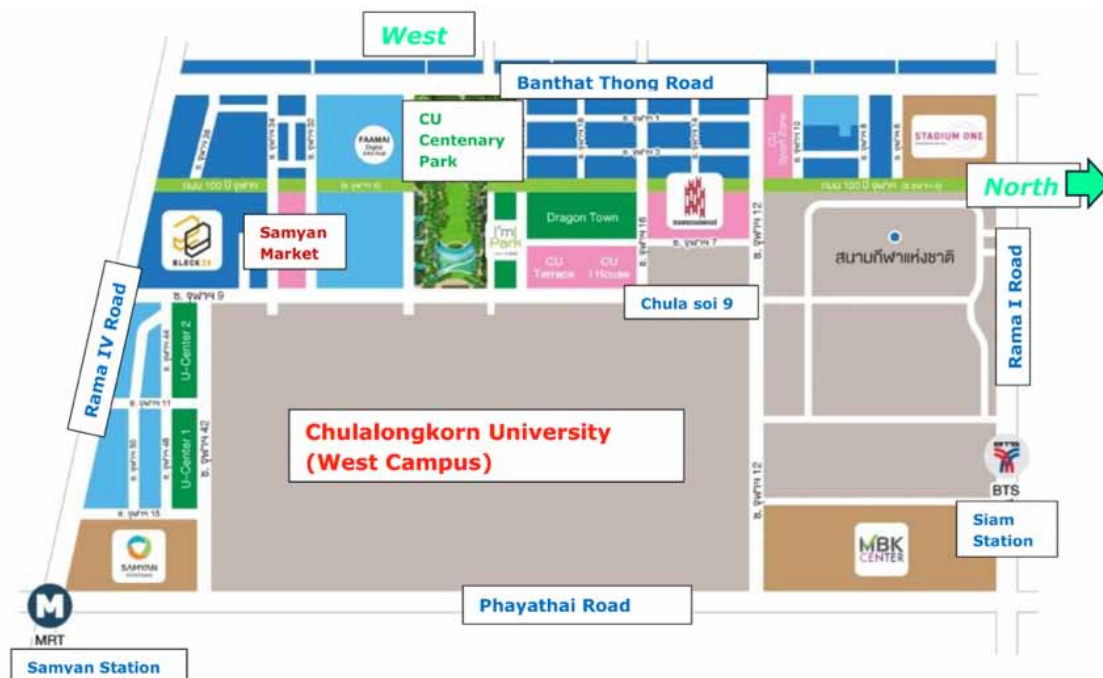
Figure 2. Map of Samyan-Suan Luang–Banthat Thong in central Bangkok (PMCU Chulalongkorn University).

Figure 3. Map of Samyan - Suan Luang – Banthat Thong (PMCU Chulalongkorn University). Samyan - Banthat Thong: From a Livable City to a Living Community.

The project researched the Samyan-Banthat Thong neighborhood in central Bangkok amid the third wave of COVID-19 in 2021 as a possible place-making site. Research results were used to design a small performance festival called *Samyan La-Lan Jai* that aimed to make a more sustainable and interactive cultural zone for a more vibrant neighborhood held April 2-3, 2022.[6] The goal of our research was to look for how a performance festival could turn Samyan from a liveable city neighborhood into a more vital, living community after the COVID pandemic.

Samyan-Banthat Thong is a culturally diverse and rapidly changing community in the Pathumwan district of central Bangkok. For decades, it consisted of an old Teochew (Chaozhou) Chinese community who had moved southwest from the larger nearby Yaowarat Chinese community, which lay outside the old city of Bangkok but was near the Chao Phraya River. Settlers in Samyan built a shophouse area west of Chulalongkorn University. It is bordered on the north by the National Sport Stadium complex, and on the west by Hua Lampong, Bangkok's old state railway station. The area is easy to access via public transportation and private cars, and close to both the modern business center in the Silom area and to Wireless and Sathorn business districts to the southeast. It is also near the modern shopping district in Siam Square to the northeast and to residences and shopping centers on Sukhumvit Road further east.

Diverse ethnic and cultural groups have lived in this area and made it a vital community since the mid-20th century. It is home to many Chinese Thai families, large numbers of young university students, university workers, along with working Bangkokians and laborers from rural Thailand and nearby ASEAN countries. For decades its large Samyan fresh market and diverse inexpensive restaurants and food stalls attracted many, along with an old community-run Mazu temple and a Chinese tutelary god shrine, and a recently built Mazu shrine by Chulalongkorn University. Since the land of this area is owned by Chulalongkorn University, most of its residents live in small leased shophouses and run many types of businesses – from food to dressmaking to repair shops and from car equipment to sport equipment – with shop owners often living in the second or third floors of their leased spaces. Since 2000, the Samyan-Banthat Thong area has come to be surrounded by big modern shopping malls, hotels, residents and businesses leasing high buildings. The area has been one of the last to undergo a drastic urban transformation, so much of it remains an old traditional neighborhood.

Samyan-Banthat Thong has changed markedly since 2010. It is now conveniently connected to the metropolitan transportation system through links to the BTS Sky Train on the north and to the MRT subway system to the south. From around 2015, the university expanded west, building larger and taller buildings to accommodate new university functions, including large dormitories and faculty housing, a large public park, a large and a small mall. Refurbished shop areas along with new shop areas also opened to a range of shops and restaurants.

The diverse groups in the area include those who have lived there and moved around by leasing shophouses. As a vibrant area in the heart of Bangkok, it is home to many university students, who have lived with and been fed by shop owners for more than a century. The nearby area has become a new cultural and lifestyle center, close to the Bangkok Arts

and Cultural Center (BACC) on the north, a major hub for contemporary arts and home to the Bangkok Theatre Festival since 2011.

Recently, Property Management of Chulalongkorn University (PMCU) has begun developing a street from Banthat Thong to Suan Luang Square into a shopping and food district, open for new residents, a sports complex, medical business and a public park made for the Centenary celebration of Chulalongkorn University (officially opened on March 26, 2017). This area was designed to be greener, with small streets parallel with Banthat Thong street and limited vehicle access, designed for electric buses, bicycles and e-scooters run by the university. It is also increasingly becoming popular among students from Chulalongkorn university, as well as a green space for health and sports enthusiasts, regular and occasional customers who travel to find spaces that differ from more modern condo- and mall-centered areas. Using this more open and natural environment is also something common to the area's diverse residents, who enjoy the space for jogging, walking, and playing sports at the parks and the National Stadium.

The PMCU has been developing this area according to a "Samyan: A Smart Livable City" vision which aims for to be complete by 2037. It seeks to develop a high-tech with a mixed used urban space with high-rise buildings and green spaces.[7]

As part of these developments, since 2018 various art works and artists have also created works in this area. This includes the "Concert in the Park" performances by the Bangkok Metropolitan Orchestra (BMO) in the CU Centenary Park since 2019, the Life | Performance festival's live dance and traditional performances like Norah and Chinese opera in the Centenary Park, and Likay performances in the community near the Hualampong train station (October to December 2019), the FAAMAI (Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts Multidisciplinary Art Innovation Center) digital arts hub and showcase space next to the park which (built in early 2020 and removed in mid-2023).

Since early 2020, most projects and developments in the arts were shelved, postponed or put online due to the COVID-19 pandemic that shutdown Bangkok several times since March 2020 and required social distancing practices that made live interactive performances impossible.

From early 2022, after a large percentage of people were vaccinated for COVID-19, some public arts events have begun to be held or to open again. In mid-February 2022, a set of sculptures and installations, many lit at night, were distributed from Suan Luang Square through the Dragon Towns complex and Centenary Park, as the heart of the new Chula Art Park.[8] Other art and lifestyle events and exhibitions have started up again, such as street fairs and CU Centenary Park. The project we designed contributed to this post-pandemic re-opening of the neighborhood when we held it in early April 2022.

To explore the creative possibilities of these developments in Samyan-Banthat Thong, we developed a research project that focused on it as an area with high potential to become a creative urban tourism destination that the live performing arts could enhance and enliven after the pandemic. This area's growing recognition as a place for relaxation, comfort, and enjoyment, and its emerging place in the Bangkok development plan provides us a chance

to relate it to national policies on the creative economy, focusing on how to improve the urban economy by developing opportunities for live, public and participatory forms of creativity.

The Samyan-Banthat Thong Research Project

Our research project in Samyan-Banthat Thong began in the third COVID-19 wave in April 2021 and ran to June 2022 (see Figure 4 below). It sought to find out how the performing arts could help enliven the neighborhood and enhance its image as a new center of creative urban tourism. We first investigated the backgrounds, interests and aims of residents, workers and business owners in the community, along with researching frequent visitors to the area. Using data from our research with these diverse groups as stakeholders, we designed a small festival to suit the diverse communities' interests. Since the research project began during a new wave of the pandemic in Bangkok, much of Samyan-Banthat Thong was closed, and many stores could not survive. So it was a time of pandemic-driven change.
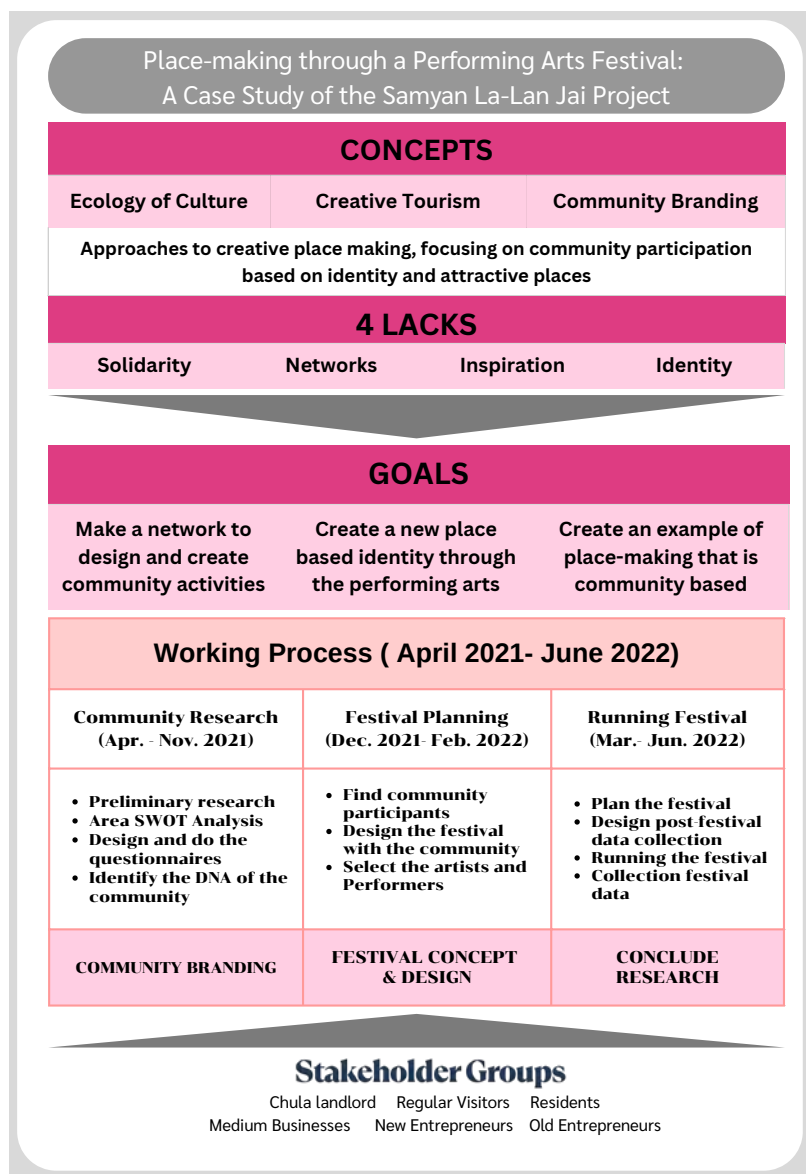
Figure 4. Research plan for the Sam Yan La-Lan Jai project and ts research process (April 2021-June 2022).

This research had four main aims:

1. To explore the main cultural features of Samyan-Banthat Thong communities as the basis of designing and creating a performance festival to make it a new urban tourist destination.
2. To develop a long-term destination development committee, including local administration stakeholders and the private sector.
3. To generate visitor feedback on the Samyan-Banthat Thong district from various stakeholders and potential festival audiences. This data would shape the festival's design and look to its long-term potential for curating suitable performing art festival activities.
4.   To develop the Samyan-Banthat Thong district into a new Bangkok tourist destination.

We sought to listen and learn from the needs and interests of various stakeholders in the Samyan-Banthat Thong around the campus, so we could see what they felt could make the neighborhood a better space for their lives and work.

The research process consisted of community research (April-November 2021), festival planning (December 2021-Feburary 2022), and running the festival (March-June 2022).

Community Research: On the Values and Visions of Samyan-Banthat Thong People
We began the research in April to July 2021 by observing the neighborhood, its people and activities. After the government partly re-opened Bangkok in August 2021, and after people had better access to vaccines later that year, more visitors returned to Samyan-Banthat Thong. More restaurants opened, with more open-air eating, non-airconditioned eating places put tables in front of their air-conditioned rooms became normal. Take-home food and food delivery were still important parts of the university and community residents' lives, even as life started to become a bit more normal again.

From August to November 2021 we gathered quantitative and qualitative data from people who lived in, worked, and visited Samyan-Banthat Thong. We wanted to discover what kind of live performance festival to design that will be suitable for the area and those who live, work and visit there, and to engage local entrepreneurs. We surveyed 466 responses from people who live in and who visited the Samyan-Banthat Thong business area.[9] Due to COVID-19, we made an online survey for residents in the area but made paper surveys and did informal interviews with visitors. From the survey, we discovered that Samyan-Banthat Thong is a good alternative choice for visitors, since it has a wide variety of food choices that people can enjoy with friends in an open-air, inviting, and friendly environment. The variety of eating choices in a real homemade style of food makes people feel at ease. Many informants see it as a good place to relax with friends while not being so expensive. We also found that the most popular businesses in the area for half of the respondents, were local shops for food and desserts, while 23% liked the food stalls and 17% enjoyed the coffee shops. With all the modern shops in the area, 20% would come to Samyan-Banthat Thong for food and eating because of its prices and because it is also not too crowded and has open air seating.

The 466 people surveyed said that the activities and arts program they would be interested in are the following: music performance (32%), play performances and arts activities (30%), flea market and handmade arts (25%), and a few others. The performing arts that they

would be interested would be contemporary music performance, theatre for young people, traditional performances like Khon (classical masked dance) or a modern puppet show and a northeastern music concert in Morlam style.

Beside our surveys, we also did focus groups and interviews with 30 stakeholder businesses in the neighborhood which helped us to create small network of those interested in our work and to develop bonds of trust. We found that 20 business owners wanted to have more performing arts activities in the area, and three of them would like to try working with us in an experimental immersive play that will share and create stories and walking tour to three of their restaurants.

The focus groups helped us realize that most of the business owners are young and willing to be a part of planning to make the area become known and get attention of more Bangkokians. They also use and depend on social media advertising and access food online. Shops on Banthat Thong Road include many new startup food businesses that see a potential that we could learn about their expectations. This committed attitude make this area a better space for their lives as food business. The food street has many different food styles and eating concepts. It reflects not only different background and culture but young and new generations, ethnic groups who live and work hard on this street.

The businesses saw opportunities and their zone-grouping to keep their business strong and living through all the struggles. By interviewing the focus groups we could learn also about their concerns. The Property Management department of Chulalongkorn University (PMCU) has worked to promote the connecting area on the CU Centenary Road, which is a small street with trees connected to the CU Centenary Park.

Spaces and Offerings of the Samyan-Bangthat Thong Neighborhood
Aside from offering a variety of delicious food, what else Samyan-Banthat Thong can offer, and what can it offer to people in Bangkok? How can these values be enhanced?

CU Centenary Road, a quiet tree-lined street parallel street running from the National Stadium to the CU Centenary Park and beyond it to Rama IV runs through the Samyan-Banthat Thong area. This quiet street provides workers with spaces for urbanites to enjoy and meet with friends who spend time exercising and practice good health. The street provides a good way to link up with the BTS Sky Train system and link up with the rest of Bangkok.

The green CU Centenary Park offers the public a good opportunity for many different groups to use an unfamiliar ecosystem of green trees, wild plants, flowing water and an open space. The park attracts many from nearby university residences. Young people come to take pictures for their graduation, pre-wedding photos, for Cos play, and for a taste of the "wilderness." Common people join in, including workers and business owners from the area, including at a small playground for children. It is a friendly space for dogs to run and for young people to play football each evening.

The Samyan-Banthat Thong area is also a district full of various businesses and places to relax. Evening exercise in the city center. We would like to shift the focus to support the lifestyle of urban people who seek more outdoor activities and to design a performance festival that is suitable for the area and the service users, as well as to create engagement with local entrepreneurs.

Cultural Features of the Samyan-Banthat Thong Neighborhood
Our surveys, interviews and focus groups found four distinct features of the neighborhood:

1. *Ease of access in a relaxed, easy-going area:* The neighborhood is well-connected to public transportation systems, road systems, and to local electric vehicles within the neighborhood. The laid-back and relaxed atmosphere accommodates participation by diverse groups of different backgrounds.

2. *Varied foodscape:* The Samyan-Banthat Thong local food shops offer many kinds of food. While some are well-established stores with a long histories, most are start-up businesses by young entrepreneurs, many with a Thai-Chinese identity. This gives many parts of the neighborhood a shared set of cuisine features in the area. It is supplemented by many new restaurants and foods – from Korean and Japanese to Isan food, roti, Western burgers and salads – which helps make the place a vibrant set of eating opportunities. Among the Chinese foods are Cantonese dim sum, Hainan chicken rice, Teochew duck and goose soup, rice soup, soymilk and many sweets. Different generations, food backgrounds and businesses help create an attractive foodscape for many in and out of the community.

3. *Authenticity:* The "realness" or genuine quality of foods made by cooks and chefs often includes family members and their helpers, which appeals to many eaters. Although professional, they often lack formal accreditation. Many stores run by old uncle or aunt chefs and their family members. Some old Chinese noodle shops and Isan cooks made food for half a century and have kept their prices low.

4. *Diverse ethnic and social groups:* People who live and work in this neighborhood at the level ground include foreign rural Thai laborers, as well as young people interested in football or hip hop and skateboard culture. Students living in university dormitories and chefs and tech startup entrepreneurs. This socio-cultural diversity provides many ways of relaxing and enjoying time with friends and family. People interact with each other over food and in the green and walking areas.

These four characteristics of Samyan–Banthat Thong became the basis of our plans to design a small performance festival that used live interactive performance events and activities to produce a new identity for the area. This lively identity could be the start of an urban culture for the future. How could we make this green space and food haven better known and could attract more Bangkok people and foreigners to enjoy it by means of the intensive time of a festival?

Festival Planning: Designing a Festival for the Samyan-Banthat Thong Neighborhood
Using the above research results, we designed a small festival that included a diverse set of interactive performance activities for diverse audiences. They aimed to encourage residents and visitors to participate while attending different types of performance events in the area. We wanted the new performance festival to involve new guests and visitors while they refreshed their lives after COVID, and to do so in a public space that could generate new understandings of open-minded experience and trust. We focused on this new playground in CU Centenary Park – with a bit of nature in the middle of the city, green grass, trees, and small ponds, good air and beautiful sky. The park was friendly for dogs, kids playing football and skateboarders. We wanted to offer activities to engage the past and history

of the neighborhood, emphasizing places and people who had made it over decades. The established living spaces of Samyan-Banthat Thong embody older lifestyles with family and loved ones. The neighborhood is becoming a new lively wellness space that can generate multisensory enjoyment and an outdoor fulfillment with wonderful food shared with family and friends amid lots of laughter.

The experimental festival aimed to become a proto-platform for including the performing arts into the lives of those living, working and visiting Samyan-Banthat Thong. It sought to connect live performance with well-established artists of the Bangkok Theatre Festival and with Chulalongkorn University and the wider performing arts community and space management group, along with the Culture Ministry and a national research organization.

Running The Samyan La-Lan Jai (Samyan Amazes the Heart) Festival
The resulting festival was called *Samyan La-Lan Jai* meaning "Samyan amazes the heart." Unable to make clear plans until late due to the uncertainty of university policies about COVID, we designed it as a small performance festival. It was based on data and information collected from customers, residents, business owners, visitors, and other stakeholders in the Samyan-Banthat Thong area. It aimed to discover how including performing arts activities and events in the CU Centenary Park could add vitality to the area and help to reimagine the identity of Samyan-Banthat Thong as a lively space of well-being after COVID.

After the university approved public events, our festival coincided with a street fair on CU Centenary Road, which included both food stalls and stalls for a flea market. The university also held its freshman games at the time. All were the first time for university events after the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic had waned.

The experimental festival aimed to show how a set of open-air participatory performance events and activities centered in a green urban space which is surrounded by a widely varied foodscape of eating places and food shops. This will project the multisensory and diverse life of an urban community in a modern Thai-Chinese area grounded in the diverse culture of the Samyan-Banthat Thong neighborhood in Bangkok. The main venues for the festival were CU Centenary Park, three small restaurants in the area and the Dragon Town space.
The festival was held on April 2 and 3, 2022, 2-9 PM and consisted of several different types of performance and activity. Each day began with mobile multi-site performances in the Samyan-Banthat Thong neighborhood in several supporting dessert shops where actors performed original scenes based on local stories with small audience groups moving from shop to shop under the title *"The Circle Play: A Dessert Tour."* Simultaneously, on each afternoon, *"Performances in the Park"* included puppet theatre and public creative activities on the *"Joy Route"* throughout CU Centenary Park. These afternoon events were followed by major contemporary music and theatre performances held in CU Centenary Park from the late afternoon to early evening as *"The Amazing Time: Golden Hour Celebrations"* and ended with an original site-specific play called *"Coming Home"* in shops near an old Samyan Chinese shrine, ending each day's performances.

Figures 5. Top-left, Promotional poster; top right, map of the "Sam Yan La-Lan Jai" experimental festival on April 2-3, 2022 at CU Centenary Park and in the adjacent Samyan-Banthat Thong neighborhood of Bangkok. Lower-left registration booth and lower-right people gathering for the April 2 opening of the festival. Photos by Lowell Skar.

The Circle Play: A Dessert Tour: Hopping around Suan Luang and Banthat Thong, 2:00-4:30 PM, April 2 and April 3 (extended for two more weekends)

The festival started with a walking site-specific Circle Play: Dessert Tour to dessert shops from 2:00 PM to 4:30 PM, since the shops had fewer customers at that time. This allowed all participants to enjoy the original performances, storytelling, and food-tasting at three different shops. This was the only ticketed part of the festival, charging a small fee for four rounds each day of up to 25 people. Because other parts of the festival began after 4 PM, these rotating performances activities stopped. Interest in this piece led to its extension to April 9 and 10 and April 16 and 17.

For this wandering performance, audiences walked with actors between three dessert shops, were treated to local stories, scenes and desserts at those shops in a multi-sited mobile performance. They visited Thuay Thanng, a creative ice cream place, then on to Chu Fan, a small dim sum stall, before ending at Sam Rap Yai, a Thai dessert store. Each place offered people a performance that blended a story with an entrepreneur, and included the shop owners' special food offerings, their memories and hopes for the future. It offered multisensorial enjoyment with food tastings by those attracted by different food and lively people who made them, matching the original stories of the sites and their owners.

Figure 6. Episodes from "The Circle Play" as a mobile or walking performance with scenes done in several cafes, shops and shrines around the Samyan-Banthat Thong neighborhood. Photos by Lowell Skar.

Performances in the Park (April 2 and 3, 2:00-4:30 PM, CU Centenary Park)

Each afternoon of the festival included a puppet show suitable for all ages on the green lawns of CU Centenary Park. At multiple other sites in the park, various engaging activities for groups of friends, family, and couples were offered to all for a relaxing time.

Figure 7. Children's puppet plays performed on April 2 (by the Jao Khun Thong troupe, figure 22) and April 3 (by the Dek Thevada-Morlum Puppet Troupe, figure 23) as part of Performances in the Park. Photos by Lowell Skar.

Jao Khun Thong: April 2 afternoon included a well-known Thai puppet troupe founded 30 years ago by *khru Kiatsuda Phirom*, and *Khun Thong*, which was a Thai puppet on a morning educational TV program. Puppeteers brought back the Thai puppet stars: brother buffalo, a crocodile, and a talkative mynah bird.

On the afternoon of April 3, a famous puppet troupe from Mahasarkam in northeastern Thailand – the *Dek Thevada-Morlum Puppet Troupes* led by Nai Xiang or *khru Preecha Karun*, showed his unique puppets made of sticky rice baskets performing old folk tales form Isan with Morlam music.

The *Joy Route* was a series of public activities for all participants and guests to try out as they wandered through various paths of CU Centenary Park. These included:
There was a workshop of *Cut-out Art* for doing paper cutting art that helped participants

see nature differently and the *Giant Jenka* game allowed friends to enjoy themselves while challenging their collective balancing talents. Some people even brought their own *hacky sacks* to start pick-up group games.

Figure 8. *Joy Route* with miscellaneous activities – *Giant Jenka, Cutout Art,* and *Hacky Sack*. Photos by Lowell Skar.

Figure 9. Relaxing with friends before the festival starts (April 2, 2022). Photos by Lowell Skar.

The Amazing Time: Major Contemporary Music and Theatre Performances:
Golden Hour Celebration (5:00-7:45 PM, April 2 and 3, CU Centenary Park)

Figure 10. CU Centenary Park in the Samyan-Banthat Thong neighborhood of central Bangkok for the "Sam Yan La-Lan Jai" experimental festival. Photo from the "Golden Hour" events at twilight as audiences prepare for the main shows of the festival on April 2, 2022. Photo by Lowell Skar.

Celebrate the Sunset with a Musical Performance
Each evening on April 2 and 3 had a performance of a contemporary Thai music ensemble in the courtyard of CU Centenary Park at twilight to highlight the area's beauty at sunset.
- *See Yod* ("Drop of Color") was a band that performed Thai and ASEAN music, sharing the same roots performed on April 2.
- *Aphiwat* was an ensemble of classical musicians who play traditional Thai music performed on April 3.

Figure 11. Left, performance by the contemporary classical group "See Yod" on April 2, 2022 and their audience. Photos by Lowell Skar.

New Traditional Theatre Lakhon Chatri
After the music, a new traditional theatre performance by Pradit Prasartthong's Anatta Theatre Group. This Silapthon-award recipient and National Artist used the traditional form of *Lakhon Chatri* in the piece "Ching Chap – Slap Rang," which focused on Thai intergenerational conflicts.

Figure 12. Performance of "Ching Chap - Slap Rang" by the Anatta Theatre Group on April 2, 2022. Photos by Lowell Skar.

Coming Home (8:00-9:00 PM on April 2 and April 3):
After the main events, a site-specific performance consisted of memoir dialogues between two wonderful Thai-Chinese artists, Nikorn SaeTang of the 8X8 Theatre Company and Chuen Hui Ching (Kheng), a Thai Teochew Chinese opera performer who would interact and create a short piece of memory and time together at the local Pun Thao Kong shrine.[10] The original performance explored how someone's memories form part of their present life. The original creation shows about how Chinese life exists in Bangkok and was told through a real Chinese opera actress and a stage actor – both of whom are Chinese descendants – using locations in the Dragon Town neighborhood.
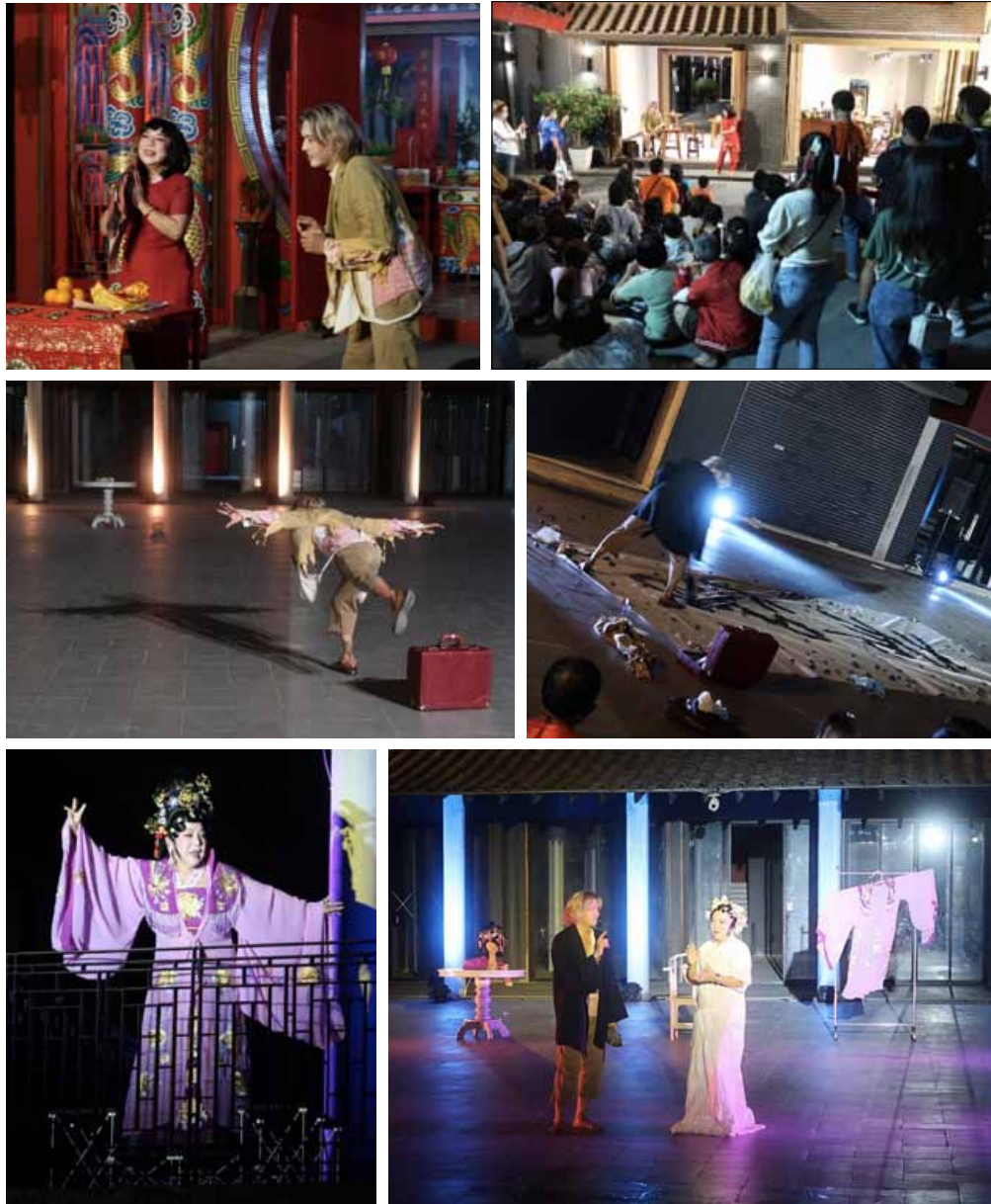
Figure 13. Images from "Coming Home," a mobile site-specific intercultural performance in an old Chinese community, Dragon Town. Photos by Lowell Skar.

The Samyan La-Lan Jai Festival was held in the first weekend of April 2022 to emphasize live performances amid the park's natural beauty, and to add live art to the park and its surroundings, underscoring how these are related to the wider community they are part of. By avoiding waste, it followed the smart, green and clean Sam Yan city concept or sustainability promoted PMCU.

This small experimental project made a *play-ground for CU Centenary Park* as a first step in creative placemaking that involved various stakeholders of Samyan-Banthat Thong—entrepreneurs, residents, guests, students and tourists, older and young people, along with artists—in seeing the power of a vibrant cultural ecosystem with live artistic activities for

friends and families. The festival introduced new ways to reimagine and develop meanings for this complex urban space by using different kinds of performing artists. They created working opportunities and memories of the area to create, share and pass on cultural life in new ways, thereby bolstering the living identity of the neighborhood.

One way that this was done involved established performing artists with existing fan bases and to have them do new work that was connected to the neighborhood space. Two Silpa-thorn-awarded artists—Pradit Prasartthong and Nikorn SaeTang, and the Teochew-Thai Chinese opera performers Chuen Hui Ching (Kheng)—made pieces that linked the performing arts to ordinary residents in the neighborhood and offered an opportunity for PMCU to host events that were connected to both community residents and to visitors, so they could interact in an open and democratic atmosphere. The performances, music, activities, and play consisted of various cultural traditions and ethnic groups, highlighting Samyan-Banthat Thong's diversity as an enjoyable way to play around in this area surrounded by so many opportunities for food and fun with friends.

The performing arts of this small *Samyan La-Lan Jai* festival showed the valuable potential of offering live interactive activities for the communities that engaged this green space. Its varied staged and site-specific performances for the neighborhood and other stakeholders included people of various ages and backgrounds in the live events and involved participants in online platforms. The mass and social media sites help call out for greater interest, and to bring out participants to create and share their own social media work with the screen-scanning public. Through both live activities and online sharing, this pilot festival called for urban people to open their mind to take part in the Samyan-Banthat Thong neighborhood. These linkages are being coordinated with the neighborhood's restaurants and food sellers in light of the interests of the young people who go there to ensure the participation of diverse stakeholders and the sustainability of their efforts. The results aim to produce a creative interactive green space which can help to enliven Bangkok's Samyan-Banthat Thong neighborhood and the city it is part of.

Conclusion

This article examined the *Samyan La-Lan Jai* pilot festival project, which was designed for the vibrant neighborhood of Samyan-Banthat Thong in central Bangkok for April 2-3, 2022. Although disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the festival introduced a series of experimental *live performance events,* artists and arts practices into this diverse and changing Bangkok area. These performances were rooted in the experiences and activities of the people who worked, lived, and visited in Samyan-Banthat Thong and helped to rebrand the area as a more livable space. As a gateway festival for the area in post-pandemic era, it aligned with the vision of the property managers of the area and suited the interests of various groups living in this diverse Bangkok neighborhood and has been followed by many other performance events afterward. By engaging various performing artists in an open green space and its surroundings for a weekend of live performances, workshops and demonstrations for diverse publics, the *Samyan La-Lan Jai* play-ground created a festival space to enhance the livelihoods of a diverse Bangkok neighborhood, improve the image of the neighborhood, and to become an inaugural performance platform for later performance events that enlivened that urban space. By coordinating Chulalongkorn University, the performing arts community, the space management team, and a national research organi-

zation, this project created a living flagship event to help vitalize the community. More importantly, this project created a flexible set of tools and a model for placemaking through performance festival design that has been used elsewhere in Thailand and also created a team of committed festival- and place-makers who could design site-specific festivals tied to the local identity of a place and the people living there.

Samyan-Banthat Thong is an area of Bangkok being redesigned as a green and livable smart urban space. Containing much art, the sculptures, installations and murals punctuate occasional events held there. *Samyan La-Lan Jai* added a new dimension to this emerging area a set of live participatory performance activities. They turned its green spaces, diverse communities, eating environments and installed works of art into a "play-ground" that marked the area as open and alive again for the post-COVID era. The festival's interactive fun connected artists and attendees to the local community, its visitors, and the performing arts community. By working with the changing area's diverse stakeholders, the experimental project sought to use live performances and activities based in the area into a livable city space that was more vibrant, interactive, and human-centered space that is full of life for both residents and visitors. By designing and scheduling performance events and activities that are participatory and inclusive, the festival and related events will help this developing area into a vibrant space for people to enjoy and involve themselves in the many offerings of Samyan-Banthat Thong and to ensure its sustainability as a vital participatory cultural zone for diverse communities in Bangkok. The success of this experimental project may be seen in the many subsequent live performance events that have been held in CU Centenary Park and the surrounding Samyan-Banthat Thong area.

Beyond the successes of the festival itself as a re-opening and gateway of the area to live public performances after COVID-19, there were two other important achievements. First, the project made a set create flexible practices and tools for making sustainable interactive cultural zones for performance activities based in other Thai lively and vibrant city spaces. Second, it also trained creative people to use these tools and to continue work in other creative placemaking projects afterwards. By developing both a toolbox for creative place-making via performance festivals grounded in diverse stakeholders and developing people able to use these tools in new urban environments, the project was more than just a one-time performance event to underscore the importance of live performances for a post-pandemic Samyan-Banthat Thong. It also created linkages among the neighborhood's restaurants and food sellers, visitors, and local artists that enhanced the participation of diverse stakeholders and the sustainability of live performances later. The results included a creative interactive green space which enlivened Bangkok's Samyan-Banthat Thong neighborhood, as well as new tools and a dedicated team with the skills and knowledge for creative placemaking elsewhere.

The success of the *Sam Yan La Lan Jai* festival of April 2022, while experimental, showed the viability of the idea of creative placemaking through live performance events, and developed a set of knowledge, skills and experiences of creative place-makers interested in and able to do creative placemaking elsewhere. Two examples show this. First, we worked on a small placemaking project in late 2022 in two urban sites in Chiangrai Province (Chiangsaen and Chiangrai City).[11] Second, from October 2023 to March 2025, we used the tools

developed in Bangkok to enhance the urban vitality of the beach city Bangsaen in a series of community-based performances designed in a collaborative project by Chulalongkorn University and Burapha University.[12]

Endnotes

1   The "Samyan La-Lan Jai Performing Arts Festival" was designed and run by a research team consisting of Chanut Pongpanich, Kuntara Chaicharn, Peangdao Jariyapun, and Chakorn Chamai, and led by the author. It was one result of the research project "Empowering Urban Communities for Tourism Using the Performing Arts: A Case Study of Bangkok's Samyan–Banthat Thong Area," funded by the PMU of Thailand. It sought to connect to community well-being and equality of people while linking performance culture to economic activity as part of a lively and creative urban ecosystem, and as an example of creative placemaking.

2   For some key policy work in this area of creative placemaking, see Jenna Moran, et. al., *Beyond the Building* (2015) from the National Endowment of the Arts in the US and *Where We Live Now* (2017) from The British Academy.

3   For more than a decade "creative placemaking" has been used by the NEA and ArtPlace projects in the USA for arts projects where "partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighbourhood, town, tribe, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired." (Markusen and Gadwa 2010, 3) Placemaking is a dynamic and active process that engages the power of arts, culture, and creativity to turn a space into a more vibrant place. Live performance events, including performance festivals, have been key parts of these developments, helping to provide new forms of diversity, spontaneity, and vitality to urban spaces that are inviting, inclusive and reflective of various identities.

4   The relationships between festival performances in an urban neighborhood may be tied to a spatial and structural analysis of the neighborhood by combining urban spatial research with social research in relation to four spatial-social categories tied to performance used by Stevens and Shin (2014): *enclosure, centrality, axiality, permeability.*

5   The festival coincided with a street fair held on CU Centenary Road that included the selling of food, clothing and other items each evening. Because the festival occurred during COVID-19, there was limited access to CU Centenary Park, through a main front gate and through an entrance from the parking lot in the back.

6   This initial perspective helped us design an open-air performance festival surrounded by food shops to highlight, enhance, and project the life of the urban community. The community formed as a hybrid kind of life centered on a modern Thai-Chinese neighborhood tied to a university community in the diverse area of Samyan-Banthat Thong. To indicate the range of meaning for the project, we called it *Samyan La-Lan–Jai [Samyan: The Dazzling Heart].*

7   An English article on the area can be seen here https://www.genie-property.com/blog/chulalongkorn-demolished-4-000-commercial-buildings-at-suan-luang-sam-yan-to-create-a-mix-use-kingdom.-93 while the PMCU's website from 2021 (in Thai) discusses its plans "Samyan: A Smart Livable City" (in Thai): https://pmcu.co.th/?page_id=21275.

8   The Chula Art Park website can be seen here: https://www.chulaartpark.art/Home.

9   The survey for visitors asked basic questions like age, gender, educational level, but focused on the frequency of visiting Samyan-Banthat Thong, main reasons and activities done during their visits, who they came with (family, friends, or alone), and the amounts of time and money spent during visits. We also asked about what kind of entertainment they would like to see or take part in, what other kinds of public activities would attract them to the area.

10   Nikorn has had long ties to Samyan. In the 1990s and early 2000s he ran a coffee and massage shop in old Samyan, near the corner of Phayathai Road and Rama IV Road, and started his 8X8 Theatre on the second floor of his shop (named for its small 8 m X 8 m size). When there were plans to make a new mall in Samyan, he and his neighbors could not renew their leases and so were forced out, with many shopkeepers moving north and east near Banthat Thong Road. Today the old Samyan area has become the Siam Mitr Town complex. This site-specfic production *"Coming Home"* was created by Nikorn to help find out where to include memories of old places and people who have changed in contemporary culture.

11   Some results of this project were in in my paper "Enriching Urban Contact Zones for Living Lanna Cultures: A Case Study of Chiangrai, Northern Thailand," presented at the 20th URRC Forum, March 8-9, 2023, Chulalongkorn University.

12   This joint Creative Bangsaen project began in October 2023 and concluded with the "Enjoy Bangsaen *(Bansaen Plearn)*" festival, February 14 to March 1, 2025, using the results and experiences of the *Samyan La-Lan–Jai* project discussed in this article for its community-based design and organization.

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Exploring Heritage Significance:

A Study of Traditional Chinese Architecture in Pontianak, Indonesia

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Abstract

Heritage buildings in Indonesia face increasing threats of extinction due to a lack of public awareness and limited application of formal heritage assessment, especially for privately owned, unlisted structures. This study explores the significance of a traditional Chinese house located along the Kapuas River in West Kalimantan, emphasizing its worth for conservation. The research aims to demonstrate how national heritage criteria can be applied to evaluate such buildings and support their conservation. This study employs observation, site visits, digital documentation, and interviews with the house's owner to understand its usage and spatial arrangement. The study assesses heritage values of the house using existing literature and formulates its heritage significance. Key findings reveal unique spatial configurations typical of Chinese shophouses, with a narrow floor plan extending backward, and architectural features such as timber structures designed to adapt to swampy conditions. This study highlights how this study contributes to defining heritage values of the house and aims to advance its recognition as a heritage asset. This work also seeks to renew the literature on heritage listing and underscore the importance of preserving cultural heritage.

Keywords: *Chinese Traditional Architecture, Heritage Conservation, Indonesia, Heritage Significance, Timber Structure*

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Introduction

Heritage, particularly architectural heritage, encompasses historic monuments and sites that are tangible carriers of human historical activities and memories (Wang et al., 2021). This architectural heritage also extends to entire towns or villages with historical and cultural significance, illustrating the broad scope of what constitutes heritage (Al-Sakkaf et al., 2020). The act of preserving these cultural assets is known as heritage conservation, which helps on delaying the natural deterioration of tangible items to ensure the transmission of significant heritage messages and values to future generations (Otero, 2022). Architectural conservation specifically aims to maintain the valuable elements of architecture, addressing not only the physical preservation but also the artistic, aesthetic, and symbolic aspects that contribute to the overall heritage value (Taher Tolou Del et al., 2020). This approach also underscores the cultural and economic relevance of heritage, which supports community identity, tourism, and resource efficiency, as emphasized in the context of sustainable development (Saleh et al., 2022).

Heritage conservation today increasingly confronts the challenge of identifying what constitutes heritage, which values of architectural heritage are truly worth preserving, especially in response to development needs, societal transformation, and the growing public awareness of heritage (Dao Thi, 2023; International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2021). People are often unaware that the buildings they possess are not only valuable cultural assets, but also play important role in shaping identity and preserving collective memory (Saleh et al, 2022). Buildings established in the past are often overlooked as they age and weather. They may be renovated in a modern style, completely changing their original traditional appearance. Private owners might prioritize economic gains over heritage preservation, leading to insensitive renovations (Abdou, 2021). Eryudhawan and Andi (2021) summarize that environmental aspects become challenges for conservation, including building condition, location, worthiness of conservation, ignorance, inaction, and minimal intervention. Without awareness, the heritage objects are unknowingly eaten by time and become extinct. To address this, identifying the significance of surrounding buildings serves as a critical first step, not as a substitute for conservation, but as a way to clarify what should be protected and why.

Heritage value assessment involves identifying and prioritizing the values inherent in a building to understand and convey its significance. According to Taher Tolou Del et al. (2020), the first step in this process is setting a conservation goal and recognizing the values that the building embodies. This recognition is essential for developing effective conservation policies, as the value of an object or place determines the decisions regarding its treatment and intervention. However, the assessment process is fraught with challenges, where the lack of standardized methods for analysing architectural and historical values often leads to reliance on subjective judgment (Li et al., 2021).

Currently, the heritages assessment faces additional challenges such as the absence of participatory processes, lack of guidance, and limited financial resources. Although, policies and guidelines present in some country, they are still lack of clarity regarding the methodology and the indicator (Saleh et al, 2022). These factors complicate the integration of conservation efforts with sustainable development and the transmission of traditional skills to future generations (Pintossi et al., 2021). In the context of Indonesia, there remains a gap in the application of heritage assessment for privately owned buildings that have not yet been formally recognized but may hold significant historical and cultural value. To address these

challenges, heritage listing serves as a fundamental solution. It involves identifying and documenting items of heritage significance before claiming to be listed by the state legal organization or international organization such as UNESCO, thereby ensuring that they receive the attention and protection they deserve (Lixinski, 2017).

Motivated by the gap in conservation, this study conducts a heritage assessment on a traditional Chinese house in Pontianak, Indonesia, following the heritage listing process. The objectives of this study include learning what heritage listing entails, exploring the criteria used in heritage assessment, and applying these criteria to justify the preservation of the traditional Chinese house in Pontianak. The purpose of this study is to thoroughly understand the heritage listing process and use the criteria to support actions aimed at preserving this cultural asset. Additionally, this article explore the heritage significance of an object under private ownership, the house of Tjong Tjen Tjan and discuss why it is worth preserving. In Indonesia, heritage assessment is encouraged at both national and local levels, allowing even non-experts to propose objects for heritage listing.[1] This inclusive approach aims to bridge the gap in heritage listing knowledge and increase public participation in the conservation process.

Literature Review: Value, Criteria, and Significance of Heritage Assessment

Heritage assessment is a multifaceted process that aims to identify and evaluate the cultural, historical, and social values of the "object suspected to be cultural heritage" (Chartady et al., 2024; Fitri et al., 2014, 2019). This review synthesizes various sources to highlight the value, criteria, and significance of heritage assessment, providing a foundation for justifying conservation efforts and enhancing the understanding of heritage significance (De la Torre, 2002). The value encompasses various dimensions, including historical, cultural, social, and aesthetic values. According to Kalman and Létourneau (2021), the World Heritage List, managed by the World Heritage Centre in Paris, comprises places of "outstanding universal value," which necessitates protection and management in accordance with formal plans. While this concept is developed at the international level, it serves as a reference point for understanding how certain values can elevate the importance of a heritage object. Such frameworks contribute to a deeper understanding of value identification processes, even in local contexts, by clarifying which aspects make an object worthy of preservation.

The Burra Charter further defines cultural significance as comprising aesthetic, historic, scientific, social, or spiritual value for past, present, or future generations (Australia ICOMOS[2], 2013). The word "significance" here refers to the synthesis of the values that represent the related value of the object, highlighting its worth for conservation. "Value" itself refers to the important characteristics of a heritage object (Kalman & Létourneau, 2021). English Heritage identifies four primary heritage values: evidential, historical, aesthetic, and communal (Drury & McPherson, 2008). These values collectively contribute to a place's overall significance, illustrating its importance to various stakeholders, including the community, historians, and conservationists.

Criteria for Heritage Assessment

The criteria for assessing heritage significance vary by region but generally include historical, cultural, and physical attributes. Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia, Number 1 of 2022, Concerning National Register and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (2022) outlines four criteria: (1) age (50 years or older); (2) representation of a historical

style; (3) significance for history, science, education, religion, or culture, and; (4) cultural value for national identity (Indonesian Government, 2022). However, some heritage studies in Indonesia apply broader or alternative criteria. For instance, Chartady et al., (2024) in a case study, employs criteria such as government recognition, economic benefits, regulatory framework, community value, practical importance, and protective measures. Similarly, Fitri et al. (2014) emphasize the importance of historical, cultural, scientific, physical design, social, educational, economic, recreational, and legal values in heritage assessment. From a regional perspective, Pattananurot and Khongsaktrakun (2025) emphasize a context-sensitive approach through their study in Thailand, using criteria such as historical significance, age, form and condition, value as a city element, way of life, and the conservation of cultural originalities. In Malaysia, Harun (2011) outlines nine heritage assessment criteria, including historical importance, aesthetic characteristics, scientific innovation, social associations, educational potential, and rarity. Together, these multifaceted criteria ensure a holistic evaluation of heritage object (refer to Figure 1), considering both tangible and intangible aspects.

From the literature of several regulations and expert opinions above, the criteria for heritage assessment are grouped into five categories: 1) Historical and cultural significance, 2) Physical and aesthetic attributes, 3) Educational and scientific value, 4) Economic and practical importance, and 5) Regulatory and protective measures. Historical and cultural significance marks the history and cultural identity and the value of the object to the community. Physical and aesthetic attributes consider the age of the building, its architectural style, and construction quality. Educational and scientific value evaluates the contribution to knowledge and innovation. Economic and practical importance highlights the financial advantages, functional aspects, and opportunities for tourism. Regulatory and protective measures focus on the legal actions and supports required to protect the heritage.

Criteria	Sources				
	Indonesia Govt (2022)	Chartady et al. (2024)	Harun (2011)	Fitri et al. (2014)	Pattananurot and Khongsaktrakun (2025)
Historical					
Cultural/Spiritual					
Age					
Aesthetic					
Scientific					
Social					
Economic					
Regulatory Framework					
Community Value					
Practical Importance					
Protective Measures					
Building Form and Condition					

Figure 1. Table Comparison of Heritage Assessment Criteria.

Significance of Heritage Assessment
The significance of heritage assessment lies in its ability to inform and justify conservation strategies. Kalman and Létourneau (2021) highlight that heritage significance is determined by synthesizing various values. Canadian Register of Historic Places (2011) defines

a Statement of Significance (SOS) as a concise declaration that explains a historic place's importance, identifying key elements that must be protected. This approach ensures that the essential characteristics of a heritage site are preserved for future generations. The Burra Charter and the Australian state of Victoria's SOS structure (What is significant? How is it significant? Why is it significant?) provide clear frameworks for articulating heritage significance (Australia ICOMOS2, 2013). These frameworks help in developing effective conservation policies and interventions, ensuring that heritage sites' values are recognized and preserved. Heritage assessment is crucial for identifying and preserving cultural, historical, and social values inherent in heritage sites. The comprehensive criteria outlined by various sources provide a robust framework for evaluating heritage significance.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach to assess the heritage significance of the traditional Chinese house in Pontianak, Indonesia. The qualitative method is chosen to deeply understand the cultural, historical, and architectural values of the house through detailed observations, interviews, and literature reviews. To begin with, detailed observations of the house were conducted and the findings were linked to existing literature on timber architecture in West Kalimantan. This methods is the extension of the methods called "physical investigation" from Kalman and Létourneau (2021) that employ recording, documentation, or a field survey.

For data collection, a comprehensive site survey was carried out, during which a combination of manual measurement and digital documentation was employed. Traditional tape measures, roll meters, and laser meters were used to capture precise dimensions of the building. The collected data were then used to create a digital representation of the house. This process involved photographing the house and using these images to construct accurate models. In addition to the physical investigation, interviews were conducted with the family members residing in the house to gain insights into its features and their historical and cultural context. The interviews focused on how different spaces within the house are used, any alterations made to the house since its establishment, and the connections between observed phenomena and traditional Chinese culture and architecture.

Using the criteria gathered from the literature review, a detailed assessment outline were formulated and included various aspects of heritage significance. The house was evaluated using these five categories: 1) Historical and cultural significance, 2) Physical and aesthetic attributes, 3) Educational and scientific value, 4) Economic and practical importance, and 5) Regulatory and protective measures. From there, category held the most significance were determined for the object suspected to be cultural heritage, aiding in the formulation of the heritage statement of the house. This comprehensive method ensures a robust evaluation of the heritage significance of the traditional Chinese house, supporting its potential inclusion in heritage listings and highlighting its value for conservation efforts.

Objectives

The object of study, or the object suspected to be cultural heritage, is a traditional Chinese house (refer to Figure 2). This house was originally built by Chinese carpenters, employing architectural techniques similar to other traditional buildings across West Kalimantan. The owner of this house is Tjong Tjen Tjan's family, therefore this article refers the object study as Tjong Tjen Tjan's House. The house is part of a contiguous block of 12 Chinese shophouses (see Figure 3). These buildings serve a dual function, operating as both residential spaces and shops depending on the needs and desires of the residents. This typology, often

called shophouses, is evident in one of the twelve, which uses the front portion as a shop (see Figure 2, second house from the left). Many houses in this block have been renovated due to structural deterioration and the shift to modern concrete materials. The urgency of preserving this building lies in its private ownership. Without legal protection or public oversight, the heritage value it holds can be altered or lost any time.
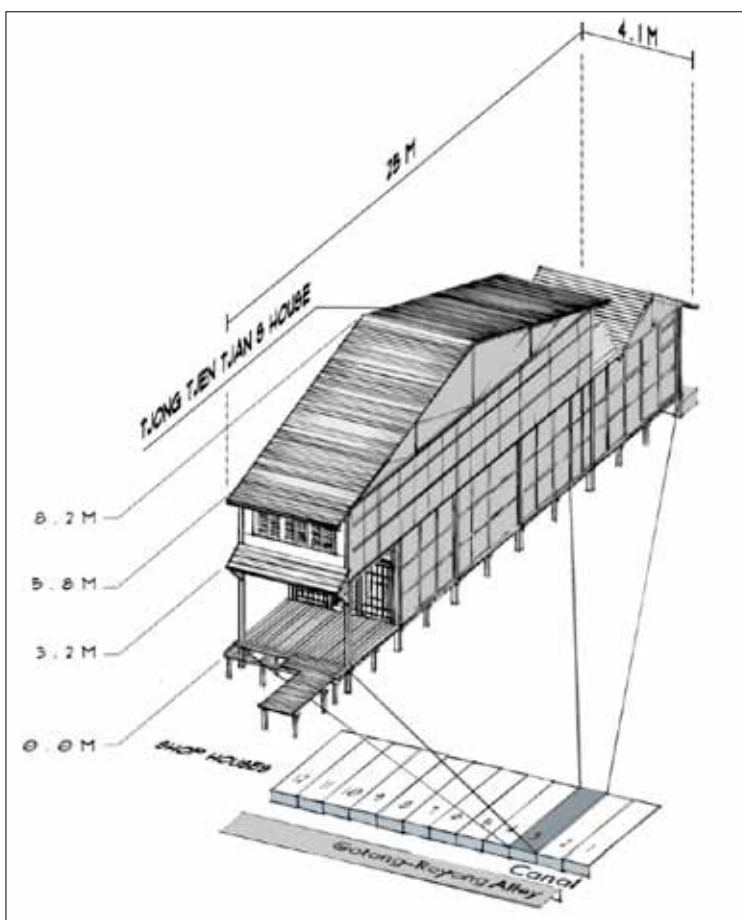

Figure 2. The Front Façade of the Tjong Tjen Tjan's House (the House in the Middle).

Figure 3. Isometric View of the Tjong Tjen Tjan's House and the Diagram Plan of the Block.

The building is located in Pontianak City, West Kalimantan, Indonesia, near the confluence of the Kapuas and Landak Rivers (see Figure 4). This area is culturally and historically significant, as it divides the land into three parts, with the riverbanks being the starting points of Pontianak's three early settlements (Gunawan et al., 2024). The land on the north side of the river was the early settlement for Chinese people, placing this house in the Chinese town (Pecinan). The Chinese Hakka community predominates in this area. In front of the house, there is a reinforced gertak,[3] followed by a canal, and then an alley connecting to the main road. The canal links to the Kapuas River, about 300 meters from the house. Behind the house, there is a wet market,[4] and further behind are several supermarkets and stores, forming the business center of this district. To the northeast of the house is the Vihara Kwan Im Temple, a significant site for the district's predominantly Taoist Chinese population. The riverside area is also home to several factories, marking the district as Pontianak's industrial center.

Figure 4. Pontianak Map and Location of Tjong Tjen Tjan's House.

The building measures 4.1 meters in width and 25 meters in length, giving it a narrow and long rectangular floor plan typical of Chinese shophouses (see Figure 3). The total area of the building is 102.5 m².The exact establishment date is untraceable, but the owner claims it was built in the early 1900s. This period coincided with a wave of Chinese urbanization to Pontianak (Gunawan et al., 2022). The house was built by the current owner's parents and has been passed down to him as the second generation. The family belongs to the Chinese Hakka community, who migrated from mainland China in the 1800s (Heidhues, 2018).

Result and Discussion: Heritage Values and Significances of Tjong Tjen Tjan's House
Tjong Tjen Tjan's House focuses on a unique surviving example of Chinese shophouses. This shophouse reflects a synthesis of Chinese identity and local influences, particularly in its use of local materials and architectural styles that respond to its surrounding context. The traditional Chinese style of house is characterized by long and narrow rectangular floor plan (see Figure 6). To explain the identity and locality of this house, this result and

discussion are divided into four parts: the space order and configuration of the house, its architectural features, the culture and religion of the occupants, and the structure and construction methods.

Space Order and Configuration

Chinese architecture often incorporates specific spatial configurations based on Feng Shui principles. Feng Shui guides the placement of furniture, the arrangement of spaces, and the shaping of rooms to achieve harmony with nature (Mariana, 2023). The Chinese believe that Feng Shui enables a house to attract prosperity or protect its residents from misfortune. In the shophouse under study, evidence of Feng Shui principles is seen in the large mirror in the front room, which reflects residents entering through the front door (see Figure 5). The practice of placing a large mirror in the front room, facing the main entrance, is commonly found in traditional Chinese houses. It is used to deflect negative energy, following the basic principle of Feng Shui, which aims to ensure that energy flows bring harmony and well-being to the occupants (Mariana, 2023).

Tjong Tjen Tjan's House is two stories with three bedrooms. The ground floor comprises a terrace (mun poi), front room (hak thong), one bedroom (kian tu), corridor (hong ci), living room (ka thong), washing area (shui shang), kitchen (heu mui), toilet (shui kian), and stairs (see Figure 6). Mun Poi, meaning 'after door,' refers to the terrace, which is similar to an arcade (kaki lima) and measures 3.5 meters wide. This terrace is connected to neighboring houses without fences, creating a shared semi-public space. The front room (hak thong) is traditionally used for receiving visitors or as a store area if the house functions as a shop. In this case, the Tjong Tjen Tjan family does not run a business from the house, so the front room serves as a garage and additional living space for visitors.
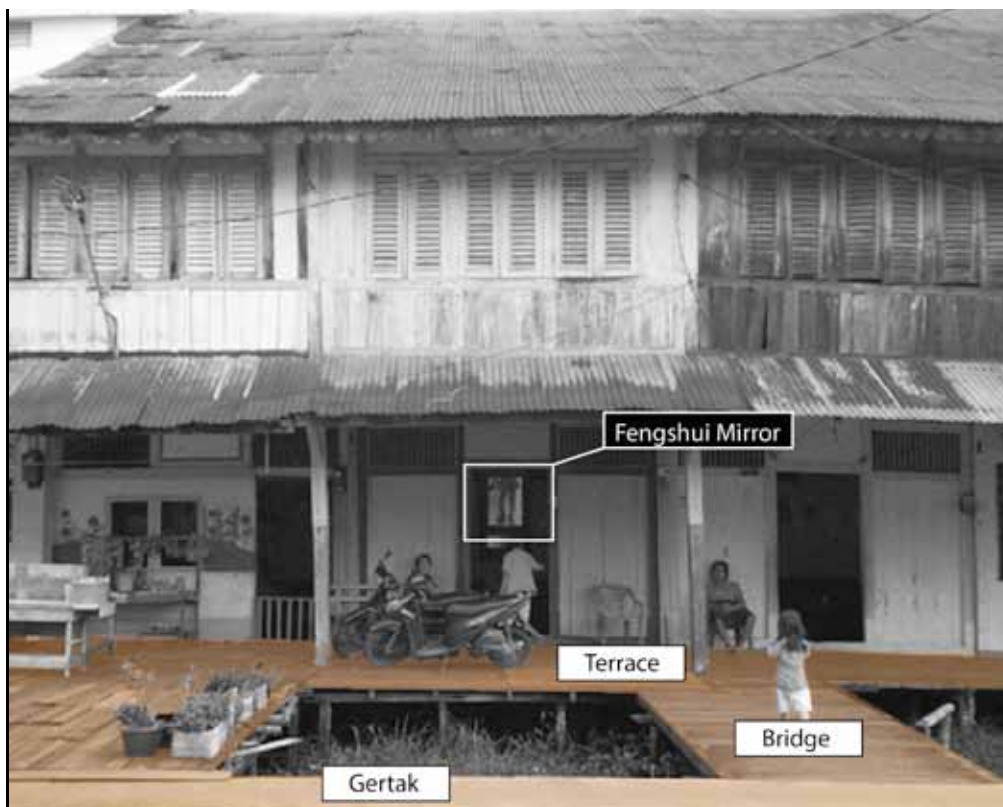
Figure 5. The Shared spaces of Front Area Highlighted in Orange (including Terrace, Gertak3, and Bridge).
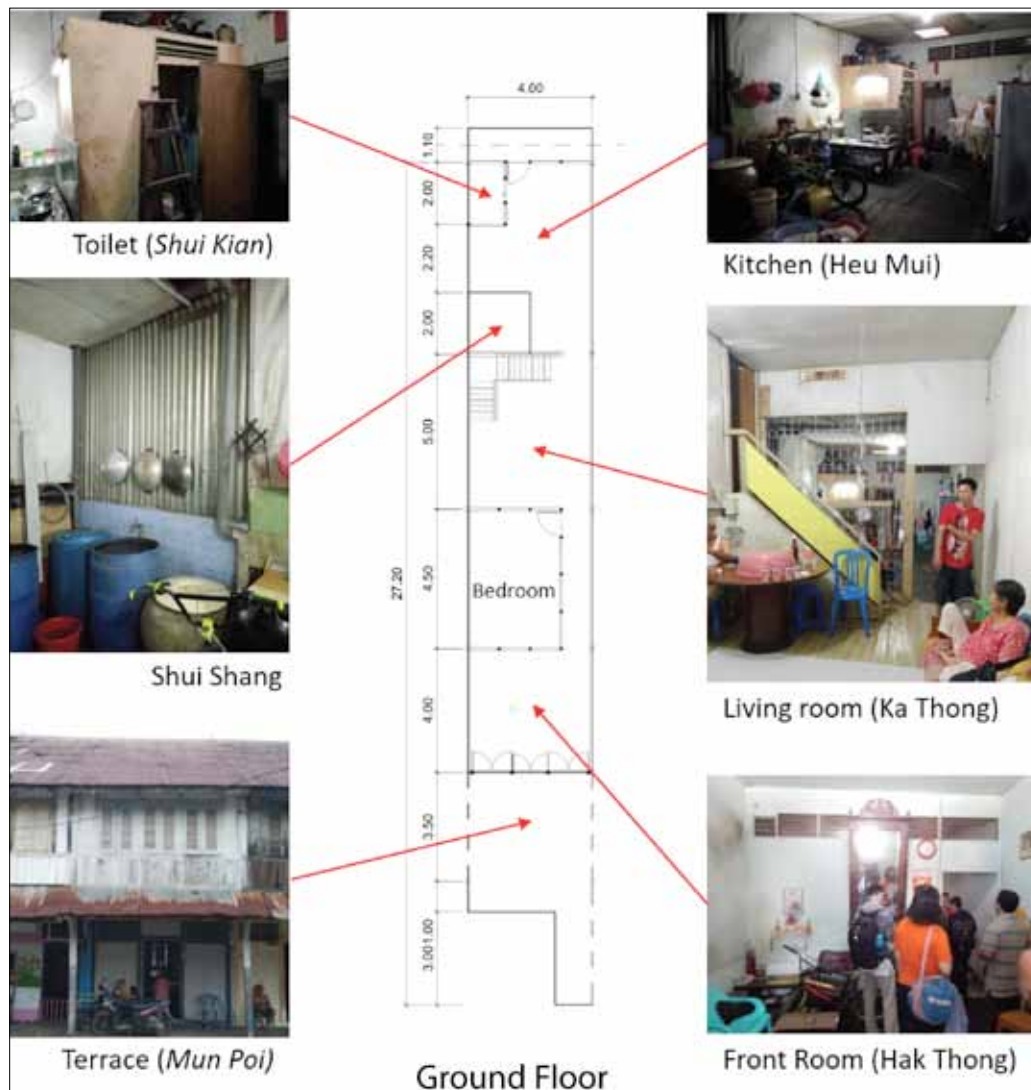
Figure 6. The Floor Plan of Ground Floor of Tjong Tjen Tjan's House.

The main bedroom on the ground floor is adjacent to the front room, prioritizing safety over privacy, allowing the occupants to hear any potential intruders. The term heu mui means the back or tail of the house, typically used for washing and cooking. The back of this house features a door connecting to the back alley, providing easy access to the nearby wet market4. Due to the house's long shape, a corridor (hong ci) connects the rooms. The width of this corridor is 1 meter. The corridor can be considered a room itself due to open spaces without doors separating it from other rooms. Indirahajeng and Widyastuti (2023) conducted research on shophouses in Bali and identified a similar corridor, which they referred to as a "dark corridor" because it is typically left unlit, serving only as a passageway rather than a space for activities. This spatial characteristic is similar to that found in the house of Tjong Tjen Tjan. From the front room, one can see through the corridor to the kitchen, passing by the living room (ka thong).

The first floor has a shorter rectangular floor plan than the ground floor, measuring 19 meters in length compared to the ground floor's 24.2 meters. It includes two bedrooms, a living room, a storage room (tun kian), and a drying room (sai sam khu bui) (see Figure 7). This floor is more private than the ground floor, with the living room reserved for close visitors. The living room on the ground floor is more vibrant, featuring recreational elements like a television.

Figure 7. The Floor Plan of First Floor of Tjong Tjen Tjan's House.

The house's spatial zoning includes semi-public areas, semi-private zones, service zones, and private zones (refer to Figure 8). Semi-public areas include the terrace, while semi-private zones consist of the front room, corridors, and living rooms. Private zones are primarily located on the first floor, except for the main bedroom on the ground floor. Service zones, typically situated at the back of the house, are physically separated from the rest of the house by a different roof. The service area at the back connects to the back alley (see Figure 9).

A unique feature of this shophouse is the air well (tian ciang) (see Figure 9), a characteristic found in traditional Chinese houses in China, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia (Knapp & Ong, 2013). The term tian ciang, from Chinese Hakka or tian jing in Mandarin, means 'well of sky.' The air well aids in air circulation and rainwater harvesting,[5] essential for houses without side openings. This feature, derived from traditional Chinese courtyard houses (Sun, 2013), adapts to smaller, denser land areas in hot, humid climates by transforming into an air well (Kubota et al., 2017).
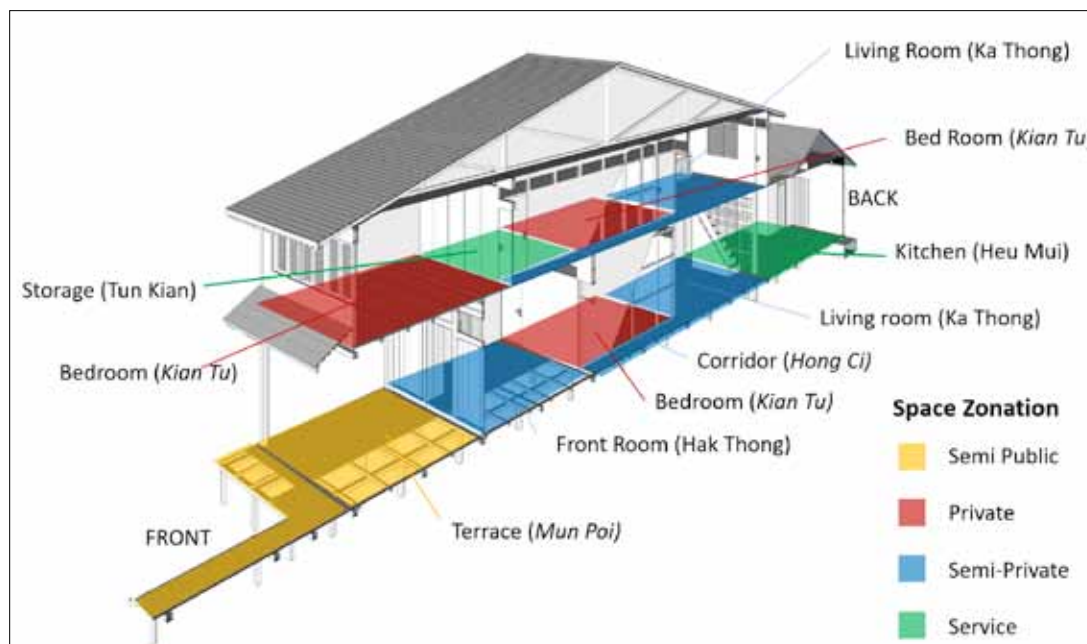
Figure 8. Spatial Zoning of Tjong Tjen Tjan's House.
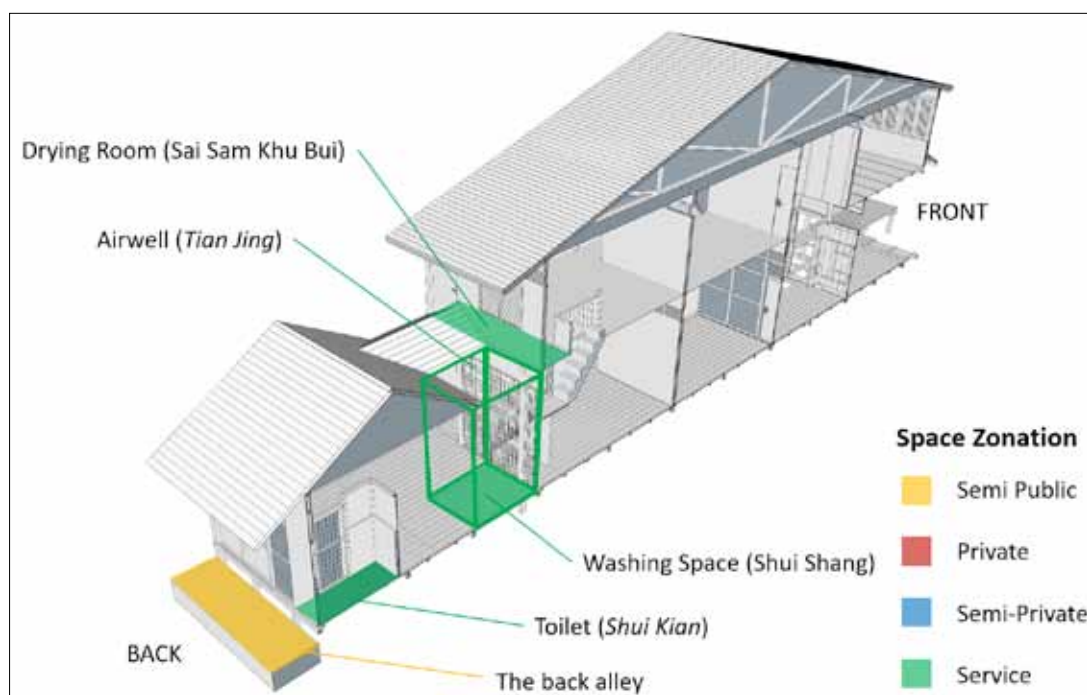
Figure 9. Spatial Zoning at the Back Side of the House of Tjong Tjen Tjan.

Architectural Features

The house's natural ventilation system is enhanced by the use of louvers on the upper windows. These louvers, a feature commonly found in traditional Malay architecture in West Kalimantan (Zain, 2016), allow for air circulation while maintaining privacy. The influence of Chinese carpentry is evident in this design, highlighting the cross-cultural exchange in architectural styles (Knapp & Ong, 2013). Additionally, some upper windows have iron

bars instead of louvers, adding a security element without compromising ventilation. The doors of the house, capable of opening widely, showcase a design that accommodates both functionality and tradition. In this house, which is not used as a shop, only the middle part of the doors is typically opened, while the sides remain closed (see Figure 10), providing flexibility for the house to shift between commercial and private use as needed.

Figure 10. The View of the Front Door Entrance From Inside the House.

Culture and Religion

The religious practices of the family are accommodated through the practical use of available space, reflecting an adaptable approach to domestic layout. The presence of two altars, one in the front room for ancestor worship and another on the roof for praying to Tian (the Taoist God), illustrates the family's dedication to their faith (see Figure 11). The roof altar, accessible by a bridge, indicates the importance of making offerings to the heavens, a practice common in Taoism. This spatial expression of belief aligns with Taoist thought, which emphasizes harmony with cosmic forces and the transcendence of human affairs in favor of nature's primacy (Castelli, 2021). This dual-altar system is not only a reflection of religious beliefs but also signifies the social and cultural values of the occupants. It underscores the importance of spirituality and respect for ancestors in the daily lives of the family members, influencing the house's spatial arrangement and usage.

Figure 11. Taoism Altar on the Front Room (Left) and Altar on the Roof (Right).

Structure and Construction

The adaptation of local materials and construction techniques is evident in the house's structure. Located by a canal in a swampy area, the house utilizes ironwood *(kayu belian)* for its foundation, floor, structural frame, and roof. This choice of material, known for its durability and resistance to water, is crucial for the house's stability in a challenging environment. Historically, Pontianak riverside residents lived in *lanting*[6] (floating) houses, which gradually evolved into stilt houses *(rumah tiang)* in the mid-20th century as the preferred architectural model (Lestari et al., 2016). The stilt house[7] design elevates the house 1 to 2 meters above the water surface, effectively preventing flood damage. The foundation employs interlocking wood planks, a technique that enhances stability by distributing the weight evenly and preventing sinking (see Figure 12).
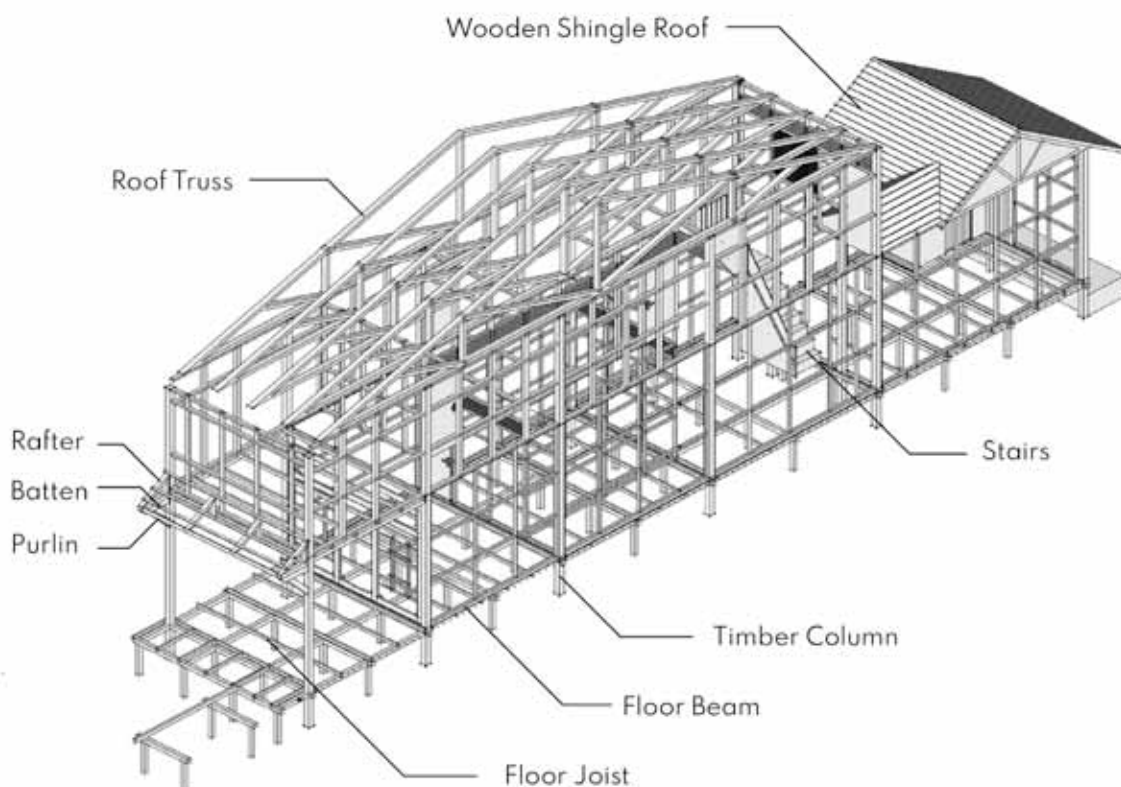
Figure 12. The Timber Frame Structure of Tjong Tjen Tjan's House.

The house's roof, originally made of wooden shingles (atap sirap), has been partially replaced with metallic roofing due to age and wear. However, remnants of the original sirap roof remain visible beneath the metallic layer, indicating the house's historical continuity and the pragmatic adaptation to modern materials. This blend of traditional and contemporary elements highlights the ongoing evolution of the house while preserving its architectural heritage through the retention of original materials beneath the newer additions.

The Suitable Criteria to be Suggested for National Heritage & The Assessment Criteria
The Tjong Tjen Tjan house, located at the confluence of the Kapuas and Landak Rivers, demonstrate a significant cultural heritage asset through its architectural authenticity, use of traditional materials, and representation of Chinese cultural identity in a predominantly Malay and colonial heritage zone. This area, rich in historical and cultural landmarks, includes the Keraton Kadariyah, Masjid Jami, and various Malay houses, which reflect the heritage of Malay Sultanate. On the southern side, colonial buildings mark a distinct period of influence. However, the northern region, where the Tjong Tjen Tjan house is situated, currently has no designated heritage buildings, making this house particularly valuable as a rare surviving example of Chinese merchant architecture in the area. As a representation of the Chinese community's history in Pontianak City, this house stands as a prime candidate for national heritage status.

Historical and Cultural Significance
The Tjong Tjen Tjan house fulfills several key criteria for national heritage designation. At approximately 80 to 100 years old, it far exceeds the requirement of being 50 years old or more (Indonesian Government, 2022). This longevity underscores its historical relevance and continuous presence in the community.

Architecturally, the house retains its original style and construction methods, which include the use of ironwood (kayu belian) for the foundation, structural frame, and roofing elements. The preservation of timber construction and the traditional shophouse design reflect the architectural style of the past 50 years (Kalman & Létourneau, 2021). This adherence to traditional building techniques highlights its value as a historical (Drury & McPherson, 2008).

The house's cultural and historical significance is profound. It symbolizes the Chinese community's influence in Pontianak City, contributing valuable insights into local history (Fitri et al., 2014). The inclusion of a Taoist altar on the roof further enhances its cultural importance, illustrating the religious practices of its original occupants (Australia ICOMOS2, 2013).

Physical Attributes
The house's structural and material features, such as the ironwood foundation, wooden roofing, and elevated stilt design, demonstrate its adaptation to local environmental conditions (refer to Figure 13) (Lestari et al., 2016). The use of traditional materials and techniques, such as the interlocking wood planks and stilts raised 1 to 2 meters above the ground7, reflects historical construction practices (Sun, 2013).

The architectural features, including louver windows, air vents, and lattice ventilation (refer to Figure 13), align with traditional Chinese and Malay design principles (Zain, 2016;

Knapp & Ong, 2013). These elements facilitate natural ventilation and reflect the house's adaptation to its tropical climate, enhancing its historical and aesthetic value (Kubota et al., 2017).

Space usage features, such as the corridor (Hong Ci), five feet area (Kaki Lima), and sky well (Tian Ciang) (refer to Figure 13), illustrate the functional and "symbolic aspects" of traditional Chinese architecture. These features are deeply embedded in cultural meanings. For instance, Hong Ci (the corridor) and kaki lima (shared terrace), represent transitional spaces that mediate between public and private realms, reinforcing social hierarchy and community interaction. The sky well, in particular, highlights the adaptation of traditional courtyard elements to urban environments (Chartady et al., 2024).
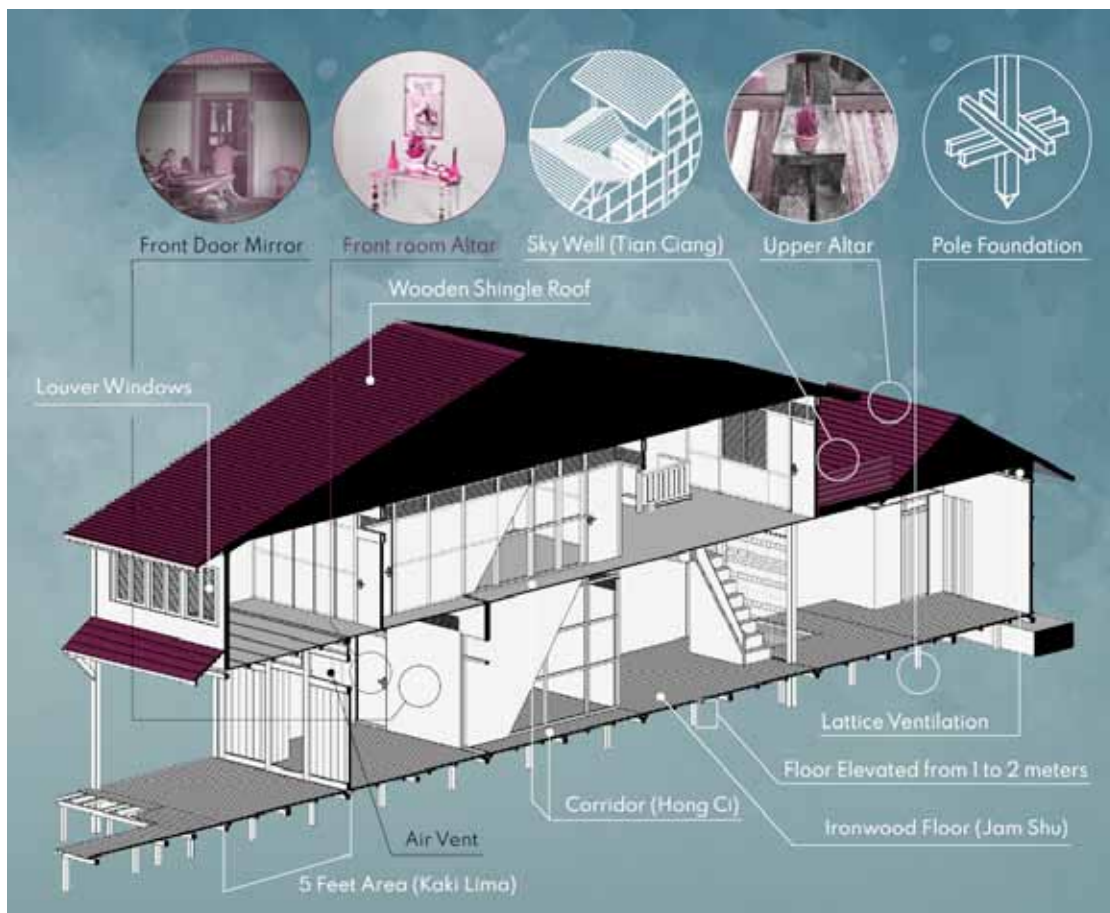
Figure 13. The of Tjong Tjen Tjan's House.

Contribution to National Cultural Values

The Tjong Tjen Tjan house embodies the diverse heritage of Indonesia and the contributions of the Chinese community within the broader national cultural narrative. Recognizing and preserving this house would not only honor its historical and cultural significance, but also support more inclusive heritage listing practices by acknowledging underrepresented cultural groups. This aligns with the objective of this study, which is to apply national heritage criteria to demonstrate why this privately owned house deserves preservation. By advocating for its inclusion in heritage registers, the study highlights how such recognition can contribute to national identity and encourage greater cultural appreciation, fostering social cohesion and understanding in a multi-ethnic society (De la Torre, 2002).

Based on the preliminary screening, the Tjong Tjen Tjan house meets the eligibility criteria outlined in Law No. 11 of 2010 on Cultural Heritage concerning cultural heritage objects, buildings, and structures. First, the building is estimated to be approximately 80 to 100 years old, thereby fulfilling the age requirement of being at least 50 years old. Second, it represents the architectural style of its period, as the shophouse form and timber construction have remained largely unchanged since it was originally built.

The house also holds special meaning across historical, educational, and cultural dimensions. Historically, it symbolizes the presence and contribution of the Chinese community in Pontianak City. From an educational perspective, the traditional shophouse model can be considered a distinctive architectural typology unique to Pontianak, particularly due to its timber-based construction. Culturally, the house contains a rare Taoist altar located on the roof, which reflects the spiritual practices of its occupants and contributes to the building's cultural significance.

Furthermore, the house embodies cultural values that support the strengthening of national identity. Promoting and preserving this Chinese community house contributes to greater public recognition of the Chinese-Indonesian heritage and its role in the broader national narrative, including their participation in Indonesia's fight for independence. As such, this building is a strong candidate for consideration as cultural heritage under the national heritage framework.

Evaluation of the Tjong Tjen Tjan House: Heritage Significance and Criteria

This section evaluates the Tjong Tjen Tjan house using the heritage assessment framework developed in the literature review. The assessment is based on five key criteria (see Figure 14): (1) Historical and Cultural Significance, (2) Physical and Aesthetic Attributes, (3) Educational and Scientific Value, (4) Economic and Practical Importance, and (5) Regulatory and Protective Measures. This structured approach aims to determine the heritage significance of the house and its potential eligibility for national heritage listing.

The Tjong Tjen Tjan house exemplifies remarkable historical and cultural significance, standing as a testament to the Chinese community's impact on Pontianak. At 80 to 100 years old, the house exceeds the 50-year minimum age requirement for heritage status, illustrating its longstanding role in the community (Indonesian Government, 2022). Its historical importance is highlighted by its representation of Chinese influence in the region, with features such as the Taoist altar on the roof reflecting the occupants' religious practices (Australia ICOMOS2, 2013). The integration of traditional elements, including a front room altar and a mirror on the front door, further underscores its cultural depth (Chartady et al., 2024).

Physically, the house adheres to traditional architectural styles while adapting to local environmental conditions. The use of ironwood for the foundation, wooden shingles for the roof, and the stilt construction demonstrates its adaptation to the swampy setting, aligning with historical practices (Lestari et al., 2016; Sun, 2013). The elevated stilt design, which raises the house 1 to 2 meters7 above the ground, prevents flood damage and preserves its structural integrity (Kubota et al., 2017). Features such as louver windows, air vents, and lattice ventilation highlight the house's sophisticated approach to natural ventilation, combining both aesthetic and practical considerations (Zain, 2016; Knapp & Ong, 2013). Additionally, the sky well (Tian Ciang) reflects the adaptation of traditional features to urban settings, enhancing its architectural value (Knapp & Ong, 2013).

The house offers significant educational and scientific value by providing insights into traditional Chinese architecture. Its preservation of fengshui principles and traditional materials offers a tangible reference for understanding historical construction methods and architectural styles (Kalman & Létourneau, 2021). The blend of Chinese and local influences presents an opportunity to study the evolution of architectural practices in response to environmental and cultural factors (Chartady et al., 2024). This makes the house an important resource for scholars and students of architecture and cultural studies (Fitri et al., 2014).

However, this study did not uncover specific details regarding the economic and practical importance of the Tjong Tjen Tjan house. While the house's preservation support cultural tourism and community identity, concrete evidence of its economic impact or practical contributions was lacking. The private ownership of the house also restricts its use for adaptive reuse or tourism, which could potentially disturb the owner's privacy. Further investigation is needed to assess its influence on local economic activity and practical applications in heritage conservation.

For the house to be formally recognized as a national heritage asset, regulatory and protective measures are crucial. This includes establishing legal protections to prevent unauthorized modifications and ensuring adherence to conservation guidelines (Australian ICOMOS2, 2013). Heritage registers would provide legal status and support for its preservation (Indonesian Government, 2022). Implementing these measures is essential to safeguard the house's historical and cultural integrity for future generations (Kalman & Létourneau, 2021).

No	Criteria	Checklist	Assessment
1	Historical and Cultural Significance		The house, 80-100 years old, surpasses the 50-year minimum and highlights Chinese community influence in Pontianak. Its Taoist altar and front room altar reflect cultural traditions (Indonesian Government, 2022; Fitri et al., 2014; Chartady et al., 2024).
2	Physical and Aesthetic Attributes		The house features traditional materials and design, including ironwood foundations and a stilt construction adapted for local conditions. It also includes aesthetic elements like louver windows and a sky well (Lestari et al., 2016; Sun, 2013; Knapp & Ong, 2013; Zain, 2016).
3	Educational and Scientific Value		The house offers insights into traditional Chinese architecture and construction methods, making it a valuable reference for academic study (Kalman & Létourneau, 2021; Fitri et al., 2014).
4	Economic and Practical Importance		No specific details on economic or practical importance were found. The house's private ownership and potential disturbance to the owner limit its practical reuse and economic impact assessment.
5	Regulatory and Protective Measures		No information on existing regulatory measures was found. Legal protections and inclusion in heritage registers are needed to safeguard the house (Australian ICOMOS[2], 2013; Indonesian Government, 2022).

Figure 14. Table Assessment of Heritage Significance and Criteria for the Tjong Tjen Tjan House.
Source: Authors (2024).

Conclusion

The Tjong Tjen Tjan House stands as a significant cultural and architectural heritage asset, embodying the historical and cultural contributions of the Chinese community in Pontianak. At 80 to 100 years old, it meets and exceeds the national heritage age requirement, affirming its historical significance. The house maintains traditional Chinese design ele-

ments while adapting to its local environment with features such as ironwood foundations and stilt construction, which address the swampy conditions effectively. Its architectural and cultural value is further enhanced by its adherence to fengshui principles and the inclusion of unique elements like the sky well (Tian Ciang).

The house also provides educational value through its preservation of traditional Chinese architectural practices. The integration of religious practices, highlighted by the Taoist altars, reflects the house's cultural depth and social context. However, this study was unable to identify specific economic value associated with the house. More importantly, the absence of regulatory and protective measures highlights the urgent need for legal recognition and conservation support to ensure its long-term preservation. This study contributes to the broader discourse on heritage conservation by offering a contextual evaluation of an unlisted, privately owned cultural asset and demonstrating the relevance of national heritage criteria at the local level. It is hoped that this study will inspire readers and researchers to recognize the value of heritage preservation and its impact on cultural conservation.

Endnotes

1   Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia, Number 1 of 2022, Concerning National Register and Conservation of Cultural Heritage, Article 31: Every person may participate in the registration of Objects Suspected to be Cultural Heritage - *Objek yang Diduga Cagar Budaya* (ODCB).

2   *ICOMOS* or International Council on Monuments and Sites is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to the preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage sites globally.

3   *Gertak* is local term that refers to a distinctive type of pedestrian pathway or bridge infrastructure found in stilt-house settlements along the Kapuas River. It serves as the main access route connecting individual houses, small bridges, and walkways.

4   *Wet market* refers to a type of market that sells fresh produce, meat, seafood, and sometimes live animals, often in open-air or semi-covered spaces where the floors are frequently wet due to melting ice, cleaning, or washing goods.

5   *Harvesting rainwater* for clean water consumption is a common practice among communities in West Kalimantan, especially in areas with limited access to piped water infrastructure.

6   *Lanting* or *Rumah Lanting* is a floating house made of wood. This type of house is commonly found in West and South Kalimantan. It floats on at least four large timber logs, each with a diameter of 0.8 to 1 meter, or alternatively, on a base of 80 to 100 bamboo poles.

7   Stilt houses, also known as pile dwellings or *rumah panggung,* are raised structures commonly found across Pontianak, with elevation heights typically ranging from 1 to 2 meters to protect against seasonal flooding.

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Journal Policies

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About JUCR

The Journal of Urban Culture Research is an international, online, double-blind, peer-reviewed journal published biannually in June & December by the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts of Thailand's Chulalongkorn University in conjunction with the Urban Research Plaza of Osaka City University, Japan. JUCR offers its readers two categories of content. One is a window into the latest international conferences and reviews of related sources – books etc. along with guest articles, special features and case studies. Secondly, its main core is a range of peer-reviewed articles from researchers in the international community. No fees are charged.

The Aims of JUCR

This journal on urban culture aims at establishing a broad interdisciplinary platform for studies of cultural creativity and the arts that brings together researchers and cultural practitioners to identify and share innovative and creative experiences in establishing sustainable and vibrant, livable communities while fostering cultural continuity. The journal embraces broad cultural discussions regarding communities of any size as it recognizes the urban community's rural roots. JUCR encourages researchers and the full range of artists in visual art, design, music, the creative arts, performance studies, dance, cultural studies, ethnomusicology, and related disciplines such as creative arts therapies and urban planning. Articles related to either the academic or wide vernacular interpretation of urban culture and the arts as a tool promoting community and individual well-being, health, and diversity are welcome.

JUCR has the objective of stimulating research on both the theory and practice of fine and applied arts in response to social challenges and environmental issues as well as calling for solutions across the creative realms. Moreover, JUCR supports advocacy processes, improvements in practices, and encourages supportive public policy-making related to cultural resources. JUCR intends to offer readers relevant theoretical discussions and act as a catalyst for expanding the knowledge-base of creative expression related to urban culture.

Review Process

1. JUCR promotes and encourages the exchange of knowledge in the field of fine and applied arts among scholars worldwide. Contributions may be research articles, reports of empirical studies, reviews of films, concerts, dances, and art exhibitions. Academic papers and book reviews are also acceptable. Articles are typically only considered for publication in JUCR with the mutual understanding that they have not been published in English elsewhere and are not currently under consideration by any other English language journal(s). Occasionally, noteworthy articles worthy of a broader audience that JUCR provides, will be reprinted. Main articles are assessed and peer reviewed by specialists in their relevant fields. Furthermore to be accepted for publication, they must also receive the approval of the editorial board.

2. To further encourage and be supportive of the large diverse pool of authors whose English is their second language, JUCR employs a 3-stage review process. The first is a double-

blind review comprised of 2-3 international reviewers experienced with non-native English writers. This is then followed by a non-blind review. Thirdly, a participative peer review will, if needed, be conducted to support the selection process.

3. All articles published in the journal will have been fully peer-reviewed by two, and in some cases, three reviewers. Submissions that are out of the scope of the journal or are of an unacceptably low standard of presentation will not be reviewed. Submitted articles will generally be reviewed by two experts with the aim of reaching an initial decision within a two-month time frame.

4. The reviewers are identified by their solid record of publication as recommended by members of the editorial board. This is to assure the contributors of fair treatment. Nominations of potential reviewers will also be considered. Reviewers determine the quality, coherence, and relevancy of the submissions for the Editorial Board who makes a decision based on its merits. High relevancy submissions may be given greater prominence in the journal. The submissions will be categorized as follows:

• Accepted for publication as is.
• Accepted for publication with minor changes, no additional reviews necessary.
• Potentially acceptable for publication after substantial revision and additional reviews.
• Article is rejected.
• A notice of acceptance will be sent to submitting authors in a timely manner.

5. In cases where there is disagreement between the authors and reviewers, advice will be sought from the Editorial Board. It is the policy of the JUCR to allow a maximum of three revisions of any one manuscript. In all cases, the ultimate decision lies with the Editor-in-Chief after a full board consultation.

6. JUCR's referee policy treats the contents of articles under review as privileged information and will not be disclosed to others before publication. It is expected that no one with access to articles under review will make any inappropriate use of its contents.

7. The comments of the anonymous reviewers will be forwarded to authors upon request and automatically for articles needing revision so that it can serve as a guide. Note that revisions must be completed and resubmitted within the time frame specified. Late revised works may be rejected.

8. In general, material, which has been previously copyrighted, published, or accepted for publication elsewhere will not be considered for publication in the main section of JUCR.

9. The review process shall ensure that all authors have an equal opportunity for publication. The acceptance and scheduling of submissions for publication in the journal shall not be impeded by additional criteria or amendments to the procedures beyond those listed above.

10. The views expressed in articles published are the sole responsibility of the authors and not necessarily shared by the JUCR editors or Chulalongkorn University.

Submission Requirements

- Worthy contributions in the urban culture arena are welcome from researchers and practitioners at all stages in their careers. A suggested theme is announced prior to each issue.
- Manuscripts should generally not exceed 7,000 words including the abstract and references. Tables, figures, and illustrative material are accepted only when necessary for support.
- Manuscripts need to use our template for submission. Please download from our website's submission guidelines page. Details are described in the top half of the first page with sample text following. Documents not using the template will be returned for reformatting.
- All manuscripts are required to include a title, abstract, keywords, author's byline information, an introduction and conclusion section along with a Chicago formatted reference list. Manuscripts with existing footnotes and in-text references may retain them as a resource for readers, but are not required. Footnotes are to be relocated as non-standardized endnotes listed before references.
- Manuscripts should have all images, figures, and tables numbered consecutively. Reference lists need to conform to The Chicago Manual of Style (www.chicagomanualofstyle.org) as detailed in our template. We recommend the free online formatter for standardizing ones references. See www.bibme.org.
- Each author should send with their manuscript an abstract of 150 words or less together with a submission form providing their biographical data along with a maximum of six keywords.
- All manuscripts submitted for consideration need to be accompanied by a completed and signed Manuscript Submission form found on our website.
- Authors authorize the JUCR to publish their materials both in print and online while retaining their full individual copyright. The copyright of JUCR volumes is retained by Chulalongkorn University.
- Authors should strive for maximum clarity of expression. This point cannot be overstated. Additionally, authors need to bear in mind that the purpose of publication is the disclosure and discussion of artistic knowledge and innovations that expands the realm of human creativity and experience.

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Criteria and Responsibilities for Editorial Board Membership

Overview

The Editorial Board is comprised of members who have significant expertise and experience in their respective fields. Editorial Board Members are appointed by the Executive Director with the approval of at least 60% of the Editors and Editorial Board.

Eligibility Criteria
The eligibility criteria for appointment shall include:
- Demonstrated scholarly expertise and ethical leadership in an area not over represented on the existing Editorial Board.
- Published three or more papers in scholarly publications.
- Demonstrated excellence in the review process, based on independent evaluations of the Editors and Associates.
- Stated commitment to contribute to issues affecting the management of JUCR.

Responsibilities
Members of the Editorial Board are directly accountable to the Managing Editor. Responsibilities include but are not limited to:
- Provide input on editorial needs and review manuscripts as requested.
- Complete assigned reviews in a timely fashion. Offer mutually respectful and constructive review of manuscripts to assist in providing the highest quality of papers.
- Maintain confidentiality and objectivity with regard to manuscripts and the JUCR review process.
- Participate in the evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of JUCR so as to help sustain the highest level of excellence.
- Once appointed to the Editorial Board, members are encouraged to submit at least one paper during their tenure.

Nomination Process
Nominations are submitted in writing (via email or post) and addressed to the Editor in Chief or any member of the Editorial staff. Candidates/applicants must submit a CV including a statement addressing her/his interests and suitability for Board membership. JUCR assumes the general readership would be able to identify the candidate by her/his reputation for scholarship in an established line of inquiry.

When a candidate is approved by majority vote of the current JUCR board members, she/he will be invited to serve by the Editor in Chief for a specified term of three years. The Dean of Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts in turn will finalize the appointment. Continued membership of the Editorial Board will be reviewed every three years by a member of the Editorial Board with a decision about candidates submitted annually. The number of Editorial Board members will not exceed 20 unless otherwise agreed upon.